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S E R M O N S

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Y O U N G M E N.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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JONATHAN MAYHEW, D.D.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

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L O N D O N,

PRINTED FOR T. BECKET AND
P. A. DE HONDT, IN THE STRAND;
AND E. AND C. DILLY, IN
THE POULTRY.

MDCCLXVII.

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S. H. R. M. O. N. S.

TO

STYON U. N. O. M. E. I. S.



J. G. KATHAN MAYHEW, D.D.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

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PRINTED FOR T. BARNARD AND

J. A. DEBONOY, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,

AND E. AND C. DILLI, IN

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S O M E O T H E R T H I N G S

IN the two last discourses I mentioned several sins and excellencies, against which young men need to be particularly warned, as inconsistent with that sobriety to which they are to be exhorted. In doing this it was my design, not merely to shew you what you ought to avoid, as contrary to christian sobriety; but also positively, what manner of life you ought to lead, as agreeable thereto; and, at the same time, in a cursory manner, to disengage you from the one, and excite you to the other. There are many more vices, follies and criminal excellencies, my beloved

B

S E R M O N VIII.

TITUS ii. 6.

YOUNG MEN *likewise exhort to be sober-minded.*

IN the two last discourses I mentioned several sins and excesses, against which young men need to be particularly warned, as inconsistent with that sobriety to which they are to be exhorted. In doing this it was my design, not merely to shew you what you ought to avoid, as contrary to christian sobriety; but also positively, what manner of life you ought to lead, as agreeable thereto: and, at the same time, in a cursory manner, to dissuade you from the one, and excite you to the other. There are many more vices, follies and criminal excesses, my beloved

young brethren, against which you may need to be cautioned; considering the depravity of your hearts; and the many snares and temptations of this evil world. I shall accordingly, by God's leave and assistance; proceed to speak of some others of them in this discourse, with the same view; not to accuse, but to warn and advise you. And may He, from whom all light, and true wisdom are derived, cause you to profit by these friendly instructions. The next sin, against which I would particularly caution you, is,

VIII. A DISRESPECTFUL OR CONTEMPTUOUS BEHAVIOUR towards your superiors, whether in age or in office. Refusing, or even neglecting to give honour to those, to whom it belongs, is an heinous offence against the laws of God, and against society, as well as against the particular persons, to whom the disrespect is shewn. And such refusal, or neglect, generally, though not always, proceeds from great

pride of hearts. Sometimes it may be owing to mere ignorance, or inadvertence, in which case it is much more easily excused by all, than when formally designed; for then it is justly considered as the effect of envy, pride and insolence. But it can hardly be accounted quite innocent, even when it proceeds from inadvertence only; because all the members of society in general, ought to know and consider what is due from them to others, and therefore the giving honor to whom honor is due, and fear to whom fear, is the subject of a christian precept.

A DISRESPECTFUL OF CONTEMP

Some persons have, indeed, made a strange pretence of religion and conscience for declining the use of most of those external gestures, motions, &c. which custom has established as marks of respect, civility or good manners; scrupling to bend their bodies, to uncover their heads, or the like, even in the presence of their kings, though the great patriarch Abraham, the father of

SERMON VIII.

the faithful, stood up, and bowed himself even to the children of Heth*. On the same pretence they decline giving the customary titles, expressive of civil regard and honor, such as Sir, Master, and the like; fearing that this also would be a kind of idolatry. These are at best groundless and superstitious conceits, tho' there is doubtless a medium to be observed as to things of this sort; for there is hardly any thing, however innocent in its nature, in which there may not be a foolish, or even criminal excess. But in general it is, doubtless, not a sin but a duty, to shew regard to those to whom it is due, in all those ways which the different customs of nations have established as external marks and signs of a civil respect; provided only, that they are not in their nature evil. To refuse to give those tokens of respect, which are thus established, if innocent in themselves, is actually contrary to the true spirit of the

* Gen. xxiii. 7.

apostolic precept before mentioned, concerning giving honor to those to whom it is due. For this giving of honor, cannot be thought to refer intirely to an inward esteem or veneration, of which there are no visible tokens or signs; but, must be supposed, to comprehend the customary external proofs and manifestations of such a regard; only under the restrictions hinted at above. And let me add, that wise and good men in former ages, to speak in the most moderate terms, were never so whimsical and superstitious as to think what is now commonly called decency and good manners amongst men, offensive to God. It is plain that they conformed to all the innocent civil customs in general, established in the countries where they lived; and particularly to those, the neglect of which might have justly been construed into pride, sourness, an undue contempt of, or disrespect to those, with whom they had any intercourse. Not to shew courtesy to our equals, and much more, to decline

giving due honor to our superiors in such ways as these, I may be justly accounted an immoral thing, a violation of God's commandments. "And all the young men."

do well to remember the curse of God,

"All other circumstances being alike, age

has doubtless a right to expect regard and

deference from youth. This is agreeable

to that order which the Author of nature

has established. It is also required in the

word of God, that the young should honor

the aged. And there is one command to

this purpose, expressed in such a manner as

is worthy of a very particular attention:

"Thou shalt rise up before the HOARY

HEAD, and honor the face of the OLD

MAN, and FEAR THY GOD." A disre-

spectful treatment of the aged is represented

in scripture as no light or trivial misdemean-

our, but an heinous sin in the young; more

especially if the aged, whom they treat with

contempt, are also good men, the servants

* Levit. xix. 32.

* Prov. xvi. 31. † 2 Kings ii. 23. 24.

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of the most high God. For "the hoary head is [most] eminently] a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness*." And all the young would do well to remember the curse of God, which befel those children who, in contempt and derision, formerly said to the venerable man of God, "Go up thou bald-head, Go up thou bald-head †."

If then, you would deserve the character of being sober-minded, or rather, if you would actually be so, you are not to treat your superiors in age with contempt or neglect; but to pay all due honor to them: and especially those, to whom you owe honor and subjection on account of the particular relation which they bear to you, as well as on account of their years. For in this case, there is a two-fold obligation lying upon you to regard and honor them; and the neglect hereof will be proportionably criminal.

* Prov. xvi. 31. † 2 Kings ii. 23, 24.

And here, in the first place, I would particularly remind you of the honor which you owe to your NATURAL PARENTS, your fathers and mothers; and which is due to them by such a double bond and obligation, as was referred to above. It will be highly criminal in you to despise them, to treat them with any kind of mockery or disrespect, though you should discover some weaknesses and infirmities, or even vices in them; a supposition which, however, I do not make without reluctance. You would do well to remember the story and the sin of Cham, who, instead of dutifully concealing his father's shame and disgrace, as he lay exposed in his tent, went and blabbed it to his brethren, that they also might be witnesses to his dishonor. An high crime indeed, which brought the curse of God upon his posterity. A contrary behaviour in his brethren, brought a blessing upon them and theirs. You should also consider that solemn warning in the book

of Proverbs: "The eye that mocketh his
father, and despiseth to obey his mother,
the young ravens of the valley shall pick
it out, and the young eagles shall eat
it."

The apostle, speaking to the young, of
their duty to their parents, reminds them
of that ancient and well-known command,
"Honor thy father and mother;" parti-
cularly reminding them at the same time,
that this is "the first commandment with
promise:" referring to the gracious pro-
mise implied in the words immediately fol-
lowing—"that thy days may be long upon
the land which the Lord thy God giveth
thee." It is indeed well worthy of ob-
servation, that this is the ONLY command-
ment in the decalogue, to which any pro-
mise at all is annexed.

Young men, especially such as are still
under the immediate care and government

of their parents, are indispensably obliged to pay them, not only an external respect and reverence, but to hearken to their counsels, and to "obey them in the Lord," i. e. in all things lawful, and agreeable to the Lord's will. And as to those of you, my young brethren, who are not still under the immediate eye and government of your parents, but are gone from them, and have families of your own; you will always be under a natural and religious obligation to treat them with great respect, deference, and honour; and, let me add, to take care of, and to provide for them in their age, if there should be occasion for it on their part, and ability on yours. Which is certainly no more than a proper return to those, who brought you up with so much tenderness, cost and care; and to whom, probably, under God, you are chiefly indebted for whatever worldly possessions and prosperity you enjoy.

But you are to honor your other superiors in age and station, as well as your

parents; or though you have none of the latter. Some of you may have guardians, who are instead of parents to you; and to whom in divers respects, a similar regard is due from you. Others of you may be servants, apprentices to tradesmen, merchants, &c. And you are bound to respect and obey them in that relation. Some of you may be so young as not yet to have left the schools; but to be "under tutors and governors," and instructors in various branches of useful literature. On which supposition, you are in reason and duty bound to respect and honor them; to hearken to their counsels, to obey them and their orders in things relative to their office; and to do otherwise will be highly displeasing to God. I shall say nothing here particularly, respecting your duty to religious instructors, the ministers of the gospel, who are over you in the Lord, admonish you, and watch for your souls as they that must give an account: thinking that, after what has been said relative to persons in other stations, what is due to

THEM, may be safely referred to your own ingenuity, your unbiaſſed judgment and conſciences. Indeed, it ever appeared to me both a vain and arrogant thing, for the miniſters of the goſpel to think of “magnifying their office,” and gaining eſteem, by crying up the dignity of it; and demanding reſpect and homage, “as the manner of ſome is:” eſpecially if, at the ſame time, they rather diſgrace their office by a behaviour unworthy of it, than honor it themſelves, by a faithful diſcharge of the important duties of it. And, by what I have read and obſerved, I believe it very ſeldom happens that any miniſter, who magnifies his office only by acting worthy of it, wants that regard which juſtly belongs to him; except, perhaps, from a few particular perſons: nor has any thing contributed more to bring a reproach upon it, than the vain attempts to magnify it by other means, to the neglect of this.

But I muſt not omit particularly to remind you of the honor and obedience

which you owe to your CIVIL SUPERIORS: whether to the king as supreme, or to governors as unto them that are sent by him, or to others clothed with authority under either. The apostle, in this same epistle to Titus, gives him the following direction: "Put them in mind," says he, "to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates *." You are indispensably bound to obey the good and wholesome laws of society, and all magistrates and officers without exception, in the due execution of those laws; and this not for fear of "wrath," at least not only that, "but for conscience sake." For they are the "ministers of God for good," ordained by him for the "punishment of evil-doers," and for a praise to them that do well. To oppose, insult or resist them, in the exercise of a lawful authority, or lightly to speak evil of, and defame them, is an heinous sin: it is, in effect, to speak evil of, and oppose an ordinance of God, of the

But I must not omit particularly to re-
mind you of the honor and obedience * Chap. iii. 17

utmost consequence to human society. And the apostle says, "they that resist, shall receive unto themselves damnation."

Meaning hereby, that if particular persons rise up in opposition to the government and laws established where they live, they shall be condemned of God: not that a nation or people, generally oppressed and tyrannized over, by the exercise of an exorbitant and illegal power, subversive of the fundamental laws of a kingdom, may not rise up in defence of their laws, of the constitution, of their civil liberties and rights, in opposition to such lawless violence; as some sacerdotal sycophants, and other tools of power have pretended, with equal folly, impudence and impiety; that they might encourage kings to be arbitrary, unjust and cruel, and reduce subjects to a state of the most abject, miserable slavery. The most virtuous, the bravest and most enlightened spirits of antiquity, of all ages, have ever asserted it to be RIGHT, HONORABLE, and GLORIOUS for a people, by any means to rid themselves of such monsters as common

tyrants; even as they would of tygers, wolves, bears and lions: a sentiment, which will never be lost out of the world, so long as any good sense, true religion and virtue remain in it.

To conclude this branch of my discourse: you will, by no means, deserve the character of being sober-minded, if you allow yourselves in the violation of any of God's commandments respecting the honor, duty and subjection which you owe to your parents, the civil powers, or any of your other superiors, whether in station or years. Whatever young man disobeys these important precepts of religion, he is not only destitute of all christian sobriety, but of all due regard to the light and dictates of nature, to which they are perfectly consonant; and is so far from being a loyal and worthy subject of Christ's kingdom, that he is a disgrace to the civil society of which he is a member, and hardly worthy to live in it.

IX. Let me in the next place, my young Brethren, caution you against the odious, horrid sin of FALSEHOOD and LYING, as utterly inconsistent with all sobriety of mind. This was one of the sins, for which the Cretans were particularly infamous. The apostle, therefore, reminds Titus of their character in this respect, as given them by one of their own prophets or poets; which he confirms, and gives Titus a direction relative thereto. "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own said, 'The Cretans are alway liars—This witness is true: wherefore rebuke them sharply.*' And well, surely, did they, who were not only sometime guilty of this detestable sin, but "alway liars," deserve to be SHARPLY rebuked.

This vice is found in persons of all ages, and all characters, almost,—except good ones. Even some of the Old, if they are not ALWAYS liars, yet are SOMETIMES so.

* Titus i. 12, 13.

and as they have lived with a lye in their mouths, so they probably die at last with one in "their right hand." But this seems to be, very particularly, one of the sins of youth. There is no sin, which at once so early and so fully discovers the perversity of the human heart, as lying. And this is the reason why the psalmist, speaking of the wicked, and their early wandering from the paths of virtue, gives this, rather than any other, as an example thereof; saying, somewhat hyperbolically indeed, That they are "estranged from the womb; and go astray as soon as they are born, SPEAKING LIES." Many children there are, who grow up in this evil practice; and strengthen, by custom and habit, the corrupt bias and propensity of nature: of whom it may be said, with particular propriety, that they are "of their father the devil; for he is a liar, and the father of it;" and the lust of their father they do.

There are many sorts of Lying and of liars in the world; POLITICAL, FORENSIC, MEDICAL, MERCANTILE, MARTIAL, MECHANICAL, ECCLESIASTICAL; &c. &c. A circumstantial description of any one of them, particularly of the FIRST and the LAST mentioned, would fill many volumes. But I must content myself with only observing in general, That under this head of lying, comes all wilful deception of others by words, to their prejudice, or to the injury of any person or persons whatsoever; whether in the way of defamation or flattery, of bearing witness, or of common narration, of trade and commerce, of political wrangling, of juridical debate, of empirical juggling, of ecclesiastical imposture; whether with reference to the business and concerns of life, ordinary or extraordinary; whether relative to this world, or to that which is to come. Whosoever wilfully deceives another in either of these ways, with any view to benefit himself, or to hurt and injure any other person, is

—a Liar. Consider then, how many persons of this infamous character there are in this wicked, false world; and how capacious a “lake” that must be, in which it is said, “ALL liars shall have their part.”

Falsehood is a principal prop of the kingdom of darkness and of Satan; of iniquity, superstition and idolatry, of all vice and unrighteousness amongst men; the grand engine which the devil works, partly with his own skilful hand, and partly by those of his children, in order to accomplish his malicious and accursed designs, to subvert all order, to confound all right and justice, and to destroy mankind. For it is by “deceiving the nations,” that he ruins them, and supports his kingdom. Truth, on the other hand, is the foundation of God’s kingdom, consisting in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Christ therefore “came into the world, to bear witness to the truth.” This is the grand

support of religion, order, justice and human society; neither of which can subsist without truth. Lying is therefore one of the greatest sins; and loving and speaking the truth one of the most necessary, the most important virtues. This is a material and essential branch of christian sobriety. They are, accordingly, sometimes joined together in scripture, as being closely connected: as when the apostle says, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of TRUTH and SOBERNESS." In which passage, by the way, truth and sobriety stand in opposition, not merely to known, wilful falsehood; but also to enthusiastic error and delusion, superstition and religious MADNESS. "I am not MAD—but," &c. This is an observation, of which hereafter I shall have occasion to make some farther use.

Lying is a sin, to frequently and solemnly forbidden in the holy scriptures; and the speaking of truth is so often and positively enjoined therein, that it is not necessary to

refer you to any particular passages to this purpose. You can have no pretence to sobriety, unless you abstain from, and abhor lying, as one of the most pernicious, execrable vices; a vice which is destructive of the whole religious and moral character, and inconsistent, in its very nature, with every good and amiable quality, except in appearance only. You are, then, to speak truth at all times, and with all persons; to be sincere and open, frank and ingenuous in all your intercourse with the world: so as to avoid the very appearance, and much more the reality, of this shameful and abominable sin of lying; the very name of which is odious, and the imputation of which is usually and justly considered as the highest reproach, the greatest affront that one person can well offer to another.

Those who have had a good, or even tolerable education, are almost shocked at the very sound of the word LYE: at least, they generally affect to be so, even while, perhaps, some of them have no religion or

virtue, and often commit the sin itself; disguising, as well as they can, the horror and infamy of it under some softer name, through an hypocritical sort of delicacy. But things should be called by their proper names. A lye does not cease to be so, and become an innocent thing, by being covered with a good name, any more than a ravening wolf is transformed into an harmless animal, by "coming to us in sheep's clothing." And let me add, though it may perhaps be a paradox to some, That a great lye does not become absolutely no lye, by being told by a GREAT man, or a GRAVE one, or a young one of a GENTEEL education: no; not even though the FIRST punishes lying in little sinners, and the SECOND preaches against it in the laity, while the THIRD affects to be thunder-struck, as it were, with the very mention of it!—It were well if people as generally and sincerely abhorred this servile, sordid, execrable vice, as they dislike the imputation, and dread to lie under the scandal of it. But, alas! the same royal psalmist,

who observes that "men of low degree are vanity," observes also, that even "men of high degree are a lye." All people in general, and particularly those that are well educated, shew a just notion of the foul, hateful and infamous nature of this sin, by their so highly resenting the charge of lying: and if, notwithstanding this, they practise it in any shape or form, their just conceptions of its foulness, will serve only to increase their own infamy, guilt and punishment. Let those of you therefore, my young brethren, that have delicate ears, or nice notions of honor, have true, sincere and upright hearts also; and mouths undefiled with lying. In the language of the psalmist, "keep your tongues from evil, and your lips from speaking guile—" "for lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." They are also an abomination to every good man; to every person of any religion, virtue, or real honor.

X. Let me next caution you against
RASH and IMMODERATE anger, FURIOUS

resentment and a vindictive spirit, as
 contrary to christian sobriety of mind. * The
 passions of young men are generally strong,
 impetuous, and hard to be kept within due
 bounds. This is true, in particular, of
 those passions which are distinguished by the
 name of the IRASCIBLE, or the angry and
 wrathful ones. They are often awakened
 in the breasts of the young, with very little,
 or no just provocation. Or, if there is any
 warrantable ground for them; yet they are
 often excessive in degree; tumultuous, vio-
 lent and outrageous; breaking forth like
 savage beasts from their dens and caves,
 seeking to destroy and to devour; aiming
 at little or nothing short of the utter ruin
 of the person who roused them up. Hence
 frequent quarrels and fightings, and some-
 times bloodshed and murder. Anger, when
 undirected, uncontrolled by reason, is only
 another name for fury and frenzy, madness
 and distraction; in the paroxysms of which,
 even though but short, people often do
 things that give them cause for repentance
 as long as they live; and indeed, not

seldom, what brings them to an untimely
end*.

Suffering these passions to reign in, and
to be masters over you, is plainly incom-
patible with sobriety of mind, unless mad-
ness and sobriety are consistent with each
other. In every sober mind, reason is pre-
dominant; keeping all the passions, and
particularly anger and resentment, under
subjection, or within its proper bounds.

Any man, whether young or old, who is
often as it were drunk with anger and re-
venge, is as far from being a sober one, as
if he were as often intoxicated with strong
drink. Nay, the former is, of the two,
rather more criminal than the latter; there
being nothing so directly contrary to that
love or charity, which is the bond of per-
fectness, the spirit of the gospel, and the
fulfilling of the law, as a wrathful, re-

~~Quid non moderabitur ira,~~
~~Infectum volens esse, dolor quod suscipiet mens.~~
~~Dum poenas poenae per vim festinat inde.~~
~~IRAEUR BREVIS EST.~~ HORA

vengeful and implacable spirit. If one of them does, in a sort, make fools and beasts of men, the other, I had almost said, makes them devils.

The angry passions are as natural to mankind as any other: they are born, and also grow up with us to a criminal excess, unless prevented by a religious education, and the grace of God. This is the true meaning of an expression in one of St. Paul's epistles; "Among whom we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; and were by

NATURE CHILDREN OF WRATH, even as others." In conformity whereto,

Eph. II. 3. N. B. TEKNA PHUSEY ORGEES, ("by nature children of wrath") according to the Greek idiom, signifies children naturally of a wrathful TEMPER, or angry DISPOSITION; the SUBJECTS of wrath considered as a PASSION INHERENT IN, and natural to them; not the OBJECTS of God's anger, as if they were odious to him, or under his wrath, even from

the same apostle, in his epistle to Titus, describes his own temper before his conversion. I had almost said, makes their birth. Neither does TEKNA, [children] here, any more intend INFANTS just born, than the same word means infants in almost numberless other places. Thus in this same epistle, Ch. v. 1. "Be ye followers of God as dear CHILDREN."—And Ch. vi. 1. "CHILDREN, obey your parents in the Lord."—So 1 John. iii. 10. "In this the CHILDREN of God are manifest."—And Rom. viii. 17. "If CHILDREN, then heirs, heirs of God," &c. In the language of scripture adult, and even aged persons, are all styled children. Nor is there any reason for understanding INFANTS hereby, in this famous text. It was indeed before allowed that anger, or wrath, is a passion that is NATURAL to mankind, and born with us as our other passions are. And if it is indulged afterwards to excess, it doubtless becomes criminal in the sight of God. This is the utmost that can be made of this place. To suppose the meaning of it is, that even INFANTS, are the objects of God's wrath, is to put a sense upon it which the Greek will not well admit. What ideas must those have of the justice, goodness and mercy of God, who imagine that infants just born, are the objects of his wrath?

version, Tit. c. his temper by nature
 and that of others, in the following words:
 "we ourselves also were sometimes foolish,
 disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts
 and pleasures, living in malice and envy
 "VY, HATEFUL and HATING one another
 "ther *." This is a temper and practice
 directly the reverse of that which, in the
 preceding words, he exhorts Titus to in-
 culcate upon the Cretans: viz. "to obey
 magistrates, to be ready to every good
 [charitable] work, to speak evil of no
 man, to be no brawlers, but gentle,
 shewing all meekness unto all men."

The sins of rash anger, and excessive re-
 sentment, are particularly forbidden in the
 holy scriptures, as contrary to true wisdom,
 virtue, and that self-government, in which
 sobriety of mind very essentially consists.
 They are sometimes represented as sure
 signs and marks of FOLLY. "The fool rageth
 and is confident," says Solomon: "He

Prov. xiv. 10. Eccl. vii. 9. Tit. iii. 3.

“that is soon angry, dealeth foolishly.”
 And again: “Be not hasty in thy spirit to
 be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom
 of fools.” On the other hand, the Wise
 Man speaks of suppressing wrath, and for-
 giving injuries, as a person’s wisdom and
 glory. “He that is slow to anger is better
 than the mighty; and he that ruleth his
 spirit than he that taketh a city.”
 “The discretion of a man deferreth his
 anger, and it is his glory to pass over a
 transgression.” And once more: “He
 that is slow to anger, is of great under-
 standing: but he that is hasty of spirit,
 exalteth folly.” There is a dignity and
 glory in suppressing resentment, and in be-
 ing of a placable, forgiving temper, which
 a little, dark and grovelling mind has no
 conception of, but, on the contrary, looks
 upon it as mean, base, and dishon-
 able.

“The fool rageth.” Prov. xix. 11. “The fool rageth.”

“He is confident.” Prov. xix. 16. “He is confident.” Eccl. vii. 9. “He is confident.” Prov.

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version, [i. e. his temper "by nature"]
 and that of others, in the following words:
 "we ourselves also were sometimes foolish,
 "disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts
 "and pleasures, living in MALICE and EN-
 "VY, HATEFUL and HATING one ano-
 "ther *." This is a temper and practice,
 directly the reverse of that which, in the
 preceding words, he exhorts Titus to in-
 culcate upon the Cretans: viz, "to obey
 "magistrates, to be ready to every good
 "[charitable] work, to speak evil of no
 "man, to be no brawlers, but gentle,
 "shewing all meekness unto all men."

The sins of rash anger, and excessive re-
 sentment, are particularly forbidden in the
 holy scriptures, as contrary to true wisdom,
 virtue, and that self-government in which
 sobriety of mind very essentially consists.
 They are sometimes represented as sure
 signs and marks of FOLLY. "The fool rageth
 "and is confident," says Solomon: "He

Tit. iii. 3.

“that is soon angry, dealeth foolishly*.”

And again: “Be not hasty in thy spirit to

“be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom

“of fools, †.” On the other hand, the Wise

Man speaks of suppressing wrath, and for-

giving injuries, as a person’s wisdom and

glory: “He that is slow to anger is better

“than the mighty; and he that ruleth his

“spirit than he that taketh a city ‡.”

“The discretion of a man deferreth his

“anger, and it is his glory to pass over a

“transgression §.” And once more: “He

“that is slow to anger, is of great under-

“standing: but he that is hasty of spirit,

“exalteth folly ||.” There is a dignity and

glory in suppressing resentment, and in be-

ing of a placable, forgiving temper, which

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upon it as mean, base, and dishonor-

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standing: but he that is hasty of spirit, exalteth folly ||.”

Prov. xiv. 16. 17. † Eccl. vii. 9. ‡ Prov. xiv. 29.

The apostle Paul, allowing the lawfulness of anger in some cases, cautions us against the excesses of it, in a manner which supposes unreasonable anger to be a peculiarly diabolical passion: "Be ye angry, and sin not," says he; "let not the sun go down upon your wrath; neither give place to the devil *." Our blessed Saviour, who was truly meek and lowly in heart, assures us, "that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment." He expressly makes the forgiving of injuries, one condition of our being forgiven of God; saying, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you †." Let me remind you of another passage of scripture, which so fully expresses your duty, both negatively and positively, as to the point in hand, that it will hardly be necessary to add any thing farther upon

* Eph. iv. 26, 27. † Matt. vi. 14, 15.

it—"Recompense to no man evil for evil
 "—If it be possible, as much as lieth
 "in you, live peaceably with all men.
 "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves,
 "but rather give place unto wrath. [i. e.
 "to the righteous judgment of God.] For
 "it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will
 "repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if
 "thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he
 "thirst, give him drink: For in so doing
 "thou shalt heap coals of fire on his
 "head. Be not overcome of evil, but
 "overcome evil with good*." Thus
 you see, how an angry and wrathful, a
 malicious and revengeful temper of mind,
 stands in direct opposition to that charity
 and meekness, that peaceableness and uni-
 versal good-will, which is at once so emi-
 nently the characteristic of the christian re-
 ligion, and so little cultivated by many of
 its professors: yea, which a false and hy-
 pocritical zeal, not according to know-
 ledge, often sacrifices merely for the sake

of promoting, by any means, right or wrong, whatever has, in particular countries, obtained the fascinating name of ORTHODOXY; though, perhaps, the very dregs of antichristian error and heresy; or, at best, some doubtful speculations of fanciful men mis-spending their leisure hours. But you, my beloved young brethren, will put on a meek, charitable and friendly disposition towards all men; never indulging yourselves in that wrath, which worketh not the righteousness of God; and least of all, when religion, holy and heaven-born religion, is the thing in question. In a word, you will remember the admonition of the apostle James, with which I close this head of discourse: "If ye have bitter
 "envying and strife in your hearts, glory
 "not, and lye not against the truth. This
 "wisdom descendeth not from above,
 "but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For
 "where envying and strife is, there is confusion; and every evil work. But the
 "wisdom that is from above, is first pure,
 "then peaceable, gentle, easy to be en-

“treated, full of mercy and good fruits,
 “without partiality, and without hypocri-
 “sy: and the fruit of righteousness is sown
 “in peace of them that make peace*.”—

Envy being mentioned in this passage, as a great sin, and one principal source of confusion and evil works; I may from hence take occasion, in the next place, to speak briefly of it. Wherefore,

XI. An ENVIOUS temper is inconsistent with true sobriety of mind. This is an uneasy passion that is well known, arising from observing the real or supposed felicity of others, in some one or more respects, on a comparison of our own condition with theirs; being a particular modification of inordinate self-love, or a natural result thereof. For, in propriety of language, we envy nothing to others, but what we secretly covet ourselves; wishing that we, instead of they, had the possession and enjoyment of it; whether it be riches, power,

* James iii. 14, &c.

beauty, wit, learning, or any thing else. So that envy is a criminal impotence of mind, standing in opposition to reasonable self-love, and contentment with our own condition, and to that charity which delighteth in the felicity of others. The envious man thinks that he has too little, and the object of his envy too much, of what he considers as good and desirable in its nature. From hence results that peculiar feeling or sentiment, expressed by the term envy; at once irrational and criminal; nor less tormenting to the mind (subject thereto, than the racks of the cruellest tyrants are to the bodies of their slaves. Yea, it drinks up the spirits, and consumeth the very flesh, bones and marrow. "A sound heart is the life of the flesh," says Solomon; "but envy is the rottenness of the bones."

Invidus alterius macrescit rebus opimis :

Invidia Siculi non invenere tyranni

MAJUS TORMENTUM

HER.

* See Psalm lxxiii. 2-14.

No person is qualified to live easily and happily in this world; that is of an envious disposition; much less is he prepared for a better. In any world you must needs be miserable, unless you conquer this evil passion; which yet is, perhaps, one of the hardest and last that is subdued. It is not without great difficulty that even wise and good men wholly suppress the workings of it in their breasts; especially when they observe foolish and wicked men in great outward dignity, honor and prosperity. The psalmist (Asaph) speaks of this as a fore trial to himself. "As for me," says he, "my feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped: for I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.—Their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart can wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens; and their tongue walketh through the earth*." This is

* See Psalm lxxiii. 2—14.

a temper which you must carefully guard against; and particularly, take heed that you do not indulge it with respect to bad men. Here the chief danger lies. You may without pain, possibly with pleasure, see wise and good men prosper in the world; and yet be highly criminal in repining at seeing those that are of a contrary character, wallowing in riches and pleasures, or "set in great dignity;" thinking this is rather an honest indignation against vice, than any sin in you. But you are mistaken if you think so. It is owing, either to your not duly considering the providence of God, which over-rules all things, or to your having too high an esteem yourselves for those earthly things, which you envy to bad men; or rather to both.

If you would be truly wise, or sober-minded, you must bear without envy, to see others excel you even in things that are good and praise-worthy; in learning, wisdom and virtue; you must love and esteem them the more for it, and endeavour, as

far as may be, to imitate them. Much less ought you to be vexed, and to murmur, if you see others richer, and more prosperous in the world than yourselves; more regarded and esteemed; if they live in more gaiety, affluence and splendor, than it is in your power to do; or if their designs meet with success, while yours are crossed and frustrated. Such things as these, my young brethren, you must learn to bear, if you would be wise and virtuous, or live happily. Let me add, that if those persons that are richer, more esteemed, and more highly exalted in the world than you, are also wiser and better, as may possibly be the case; certainly you ought to rejoice with them in their prosperity, in the blessings of divine providence bestowed upon them, instead of being envious at them; according to the apostolic injunction, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice." But if they are foolish and wicked, while you are wise and virtuous, there is still the less reason why you should envy them any outward prosperity. This were as if an honest

man should envy to the thief, robber or murderer, the rich velvet, the fashionable wig, and laced cloaths, in which he sees him carried to TYBURN! To cure you of envying the foolish and wicked, only do as Asaph did—Enter into the “sanctuary of
 “God, and understand their end. Surely
 “thou didst set them in slippery places:
 “thou castedst them down to destruction;
 “How are they brought down to desola-
 “tion as in a moment*!” This is the most effectual preservative against that common weakness, that criminal impotence of mind, envy; as well as a sovereign remedy for so bad a disorder, in those upon whom it has already seized, whether old or young. I shall therefore dismiss this particular, and close the discourse with the counsel and prescription of the royal psalmist. “Fret
 “not thyself because of evil-doers; nei-
 “ther be thou envious against the workers
 “of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut
 “down like the grass, and wither as the

* Psalm lxxiii. 17.—

“green herb.—Commit thy way unto the
 “Lord, trust also in him.—Rest in the
 “Lord, and wait patiently for him. Fret
 “not thyself because of him that prospereth
 “in his way, because of the man who
 “bringeth evil devices to pass. Cease
 “from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not
 “thyself in any wise to do evil. For evil
 “doers shall be cut off—Yet a little while,
 “and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou
 “shalt diligently consider his place, and it
 “shall not be.”

• Psal. xxxvii. 1—10.

SEE MON VILL

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

SEE MON VILL

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

REPUGNANT TO

SOBER-MINDEDNESS

INTEMPERANCE, UNCLEANLINESS,

FRAUD, COVETOUSNESS, AND

ENTHUSIASM.

S E R M O N IX.

DISPLAYS

OTHER THINGS

REPUGNANT TO

SOBER-MINDEDNESS,

A S

INTEMPERANCE, UNCLEANNES,

FRAUD, COVETOUSNESS, AND

ENTHUSIASM.

S E R M O N IX.

TITUS II. 6.

Young Men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

DISCOURSE

In the foregoing discourse I have mentioned several things as utterly inconsistent with that sober-mindedness exhort to in the text. I would not detain you with a repetition; but hoping the several sins and follies pointed forth, explained and enforced, have been treasured up in your memories, and that your souls are resolved to have no fellowship with any of them, I hasten to a conclusion.

XII. thing directly repugnant to christian sobriety, which is, all excessive indulgence of your sensual appetites in eating and drinking. We often speak of sobriety, more especially, contradi-

S E R M O N IX.

TITUS ii. 6.

YOUNG MEN, *likewise exhort to be sober-minded.*

IN the three preceding discourses, I have mentioned several things as utterly inconsistent with that sober-mindedness exhorted to in the text. I would not detain you with a repetition ; but hoping the several sins and follies pointed forth, explained and enforced, have been treasured up in your memories, and that your souls are resolved to have no fellowship with ANY of them, I hasten to a

XII. thing directly repugnant to christian sobriety, which is, all EXCESSIVE INDULGENCE of your sensual appetites in EATING and DRINKING. We often speak of sobriety, more especially in contradis-

tion to the shameful vices of intemperance; of which these two are not the least. **BRUTAL** * Ino They are probably more frequently the vices of young men, than of the old, though far from being peculiar to them. But be that as it may, it is certain they are great, dishonorable and pernicious vices, by whomsoever they are practised. They are destructive at once to the health of body and mind; and are great occasions of consuming both the time and the

The apostle speaks of the several vices of intemperance, under the terms—"pollutions of the world;" and compares those persons who return to, after having forsaken them, to a "dog returning to his vomit," and a "sow, to her wallowing in the mire." [2 Pet. ii. 20, 22]

The courtly Horace did not think the same images too gross or indelicate, in speaking of the same vices under the fable of the CIRCÆAN cup—and this with express reference to a King, ULYSSES

Quæ si cum focis stultus, cupidusque bibisset,
fuisset TURPIS et excors;

Vixisset CANIS IMMUNDUS, vel AMICA LUTOSUS;

substance. They indispose people for serving either God or their generation. They are fruitful of mischief, not only to those that are guilty of them, but to society; and more particularly to their own families, if any they have.

These vices are very frequently and severely censured in scripture, under the well-known terms, **DRUNKENNESS** and **GLUTTONY**. Let me remind you of some of the many scriptural warnings against these shameful and ruinous excesses. "Hear thou, my son," says Solomon, "and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way. Be not amongst wine-bibbers; amongst riotous eaters of flesh. For the drunkard and the glutton shall surely come to poverty; and drowsiness shall cloath a man with rags*." And again in the same chapter: "Who hath wo? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without

* Prov. xxiii. 19, 20, 21.

"cause? who hath redness of eyes? They
 "that tarry long at the wine.—Look not
 "thou upon the wine when it is red,
 "when it giveth his colour in the cup,
 "when it moveth itself aright. At the best
 "it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like
 "an adder." Among divers other woes
 and curses, denounced against several sorts
 of sinners, [Isai. ch. v.] this is one: "Wo
 "unto them that rise up early in the morn-
 "ing, that they may follow strong drink;
 "that continue until night, till wine in-
 "flame them. And the harp and viol, the
 "tabret and pipe, and wine are in their
 "feasts: but they regard not the work of
 "the Lord, neither consider the operation
 "of his hand."

You would do well also to consider our
 Saviour's well-known parable* of the
 foolish young man, who wasted his sub-
 stance with riotous living; and the misery
 and dishonor to which he was reduced;

* Luke xxv.

when he became the keeper and feeder of swine for another, and would fain have filled himself with their HUSKS, after he had spent all he had in luxury and excess; but was not permitted to do even THAT. Though the ultimate design of this part of the parable, is to represent the misery and shame to which all wicked men in general bring themselves by forsaking God, and the house of their heavenly Father, where there is "bread enough and to spare"—true and abundant felicity; yet it may be usefully improved in the literal sense, as an example to the young, of the sad effects of riot, luxury and intemperance; and a solemn lesson or warning to them, to beware of those vices in particular. But our Saviour gives you a more direct admonition with reference to these sins: "Take heed to yourselves," says he, "lest at ANY TIME your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness—and so that day come upon you unawares *,"—"Lest at

* Luke xx. 34.

“any time”—There are times of peculiar temptation to these vices; particularly seasons of rejoicing, whether public, or more private. And there are persons who, tho’ not habitually given to intemperance, are yet sometimes shamefully overtaken on such occasions. It will, therefore, be your wisdom and duty, to be particularly upon your guard at all such seasons.

The apostle Paul speaks of some persons, “whose God is their BELLY, and whose glory is their shame.” This is peculiarly applicable to the drunkard and the glutton; especially to those who even make their boasts, what mighty feats they have done in eating and drinking; what heroes they are at the table; and how many men of might, by means of their superior prowess, they have seen fallen as DEAD under it. Such shameful and shameless men there are in the world; and some of them perhaps, at the same time, very zealous for the religious observation of CHRISTMAS, or other HOLIDAYS; think-

ing those who disregard them, very impious, wicked men!—The same apostle admonishes you and all, who are blessed with the light of the gospel, to abstain from all such works of heathenish darkness and ignorance as these; saying, “Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ; and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

Now, it is evident that he is void of christian sobriety, who addicts himself to either of these vices. For what a solecism would it be, to speak of a religious, sober drunkard or glutton! If you are truly sober and virtuous, you will not allow yourselves in an over delicate and luxurious way of living; much less in such grossly criminal excesses as these. One design of our Saviour's parable of Lazarus, and the rich

man who was "cloathed in fine linen, and
"fared sumptuously EVERY DAY*," seems
to have been, to reprove such a way of life
as dangerous, and contrary to the spirit of
religion; even though people should ab-
stain from all gross acts of intemperance.
And it is, unquestionably, inconsistent with
christian sobriety, to make it as it were a
business to pamper the body, and to live a
delicate, luxurious life; though a person
should never be chargeable with gluttony
or drunkenness. If this is what is upper-
most in a man's thoughts or concerns, in-
stead of the cultivating his mind, and pleas-
ing God, he does, without doubt, "make
"provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts
"thereof," in the sense wherein it is for-
bidden by the apostle; and walks after the
flesh, not after the spirit.

To conclude this head: if you are so-
BER-MINDED, you will make the pleasing of
God your end, your habitual endeavour;

* Luke xvi.

and will, of consequence, restrain your natural appetites within the bounds of such a temperance, as is best adapted to health, strength, and activity; such a moderation, as will most contribute to the vigor both of body and mind; and thereby fit you for discharging the various duties of life and godliness, with spirit and alertness: instead of having your bodies and senses stupified, and even your diviner part benumbed, borne down and carnalized, * by an excessive load of meat and drink; at once to your own shame, and to the scandalous abuse of the bounties of providence, given to be received only with temperance and thanksgiving, by them that know the truth. From these, One may naturally proceed to speak of some other lusts of the flesh, which

* ————— Vides ut pallidus omnis
 Cœnâ desurgat dubiâ? quin corpus onustum
 Hesternis vitiis ANIMUM quoque prægravat
 unâ,
 Atque affigit humo DIVINÆ PARTICULAM
 AURÆ. HOR.

are to be avoided as contrary to sobriety. Accordingly let me caution you, in the next place,

XIII. Against all those vices which, in the language of scripture, are comprehended under the terms **UNCLEANNESS**, and **THE LUST OF UNCLEANNESS**. The several vices included in these general terms, are emphatically the vices of youth. And they are accordingly supposed to be the sins primarily intended by the apostle Paul, in one of his epistles, by **YOUTHFUL LUSTS** *—“Flee also youthful lusts,” says he: i. e. all the vices of lasciviousness and incontinence, or those which are opposed to chastity.

Uncleanness is a sin of a very heinous nature, directly opposite to christian sobriety, and of pernicious consequence to society, as well as to them that are enslaved to it. There are not indeed wanting, old

* 2 Tim. ii. 22.

sinners and servants of satan, who transgress in this way, to their own infamy; and often, to the ruin of their estates, families, health, bodies and souls at once. But yet, as was intimated before, this is a sin which reigns more generally amongst the young; who therefore need to be very particularly warned against it. The holy scriptures abound with prohibitions, and very severe censures of it. So that there will be scarce need of my doing any thing more upon this head, than to remind you of some of the many passages of scripture, relative to the folly and misery of this vice, and the heavy curses of God denounced against those who are guilty of it.

You cannot be ignorant that one of the ten commandments, in which the moral law is epitomised, or contained in brief, relates particularly to this sin—"Thou shalt not commit adultery." And as this vice, in the various evil forms of it, frequently accompanies intemperance in other respects, yea, is often the effect thereof;

we find it mentioned and censured together with them—"I will punish them for their ways, and reward them for their doings; For they shall eat, and not have enough; they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase; because they have left off to take heed to the Lord. Whoredom, and wine, and new wine take away the heart*." So again:—"When I fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops to the harlots houses. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this †?"

There are many passages in the Proverbs of Solomon, which particularly set forth the folly, dishonor, and ruinous effects of this vice: and, surely, no person was more capable of giving good counsel to young men in this respect than he—"My son," says he, "attend unto my wisdom, and

* Hof. iv. † Jer. chap. v.

“bow thine ear to my understanding—For
“the lips of a strange woman [i. e. an
“harlot] drop as an honey-comb, and
“her mouth is smoother than oil: but her
“end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a
“two-edged sword. Her feet go down to
“death, and her steps take hold on hell—
“Remove thy way from her, and come
“not nigh the door of her house; lest thou
“give thine honor unto others, and thy
“years unto the cruel: lest strangers be
“filled with thy wealth, and thy labors be
“in the house of strangers; and thou
“mourn at the last, when thy flesh and
“thy body are consumed*.” In the fol-
lowing chapter, speaking still of the strange
woman, or harlot, the wise man says,
“Lust not after her beauty in thine heart,
“neither let her take thee with her eye-
“lids. For by means of an whorish woman,
“a man is brought to a piece of bread;
“and the adulterers will hunt for the pre-
“cious life.” Can a man take fire in his

* Prov. chap. v.

“bosom, and his cloaths not be burnt?”
 —He speaks a little after of those who are
 addicted to this vice, as destitute of under-
 standing—“Whoso committeth adultery
 “with a woman, lacketh understanding;
 “he that doeth it, destroyeth his own soul.
 “A wound and dishonor shall he get;
 “and his reproach shall not be wiped
 “away*.”

The next chapter is chiefly taken up
 with an account of the leud woman, or
 harlot, and the deceitful, wicked arts,
 which she practises too successfully on
 young men void of understanding and ex-
 perience. After a very circumstantial de-
 scription of her guileful, serpentine ma-
 nagements and enticements, the wise man
 proceeds to relate the miserable end of the
 foolish unhappy young one; and to set him
 up for a warning to future ages. The ac-
 count ends thus: “With her much fair
 “speech she causeth him to yield; with

* Prov. chap. vi.

“the flattering of her lips she forced him.
 “He goeth after her straitway,” (be pleased
 to take particular notice of what follows—)
 “as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a
 “fool to the correction of the stocks; till
 “a dart strike through his liver, as a bird
 “hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not
 “that it is for his life. Hearken unto me
 “now therefore, O ye children, and at-
 “tend to the words of my mouth. Let not
 “thine heart encline to her ways; go not
 “after her paths. For she hath cast down
 “many wounded; yea, many strong men
 “have been slain by her. Her house is the
 “way to hell, going down to the cham-
 “bers of death.”

To these solemn counsels and warnings
 out of the OLD TESTAMENT, let me sub-
 join two or three from the NEW—“Mor-
 “tify therefore your members which are
 “upon the earth; fornication, unclea-
 “ness, inordinate affection, evil concupis-

“ cence—For which things sake the wrath
 “ of God, cometh on the children of dis-
 “ obedience *.” And again: “ The Lord
 “ knoweth how—to reserve the unjust un-
 “ to the day of judgment to be punished;
 “ but CHIEFLY them that walk after the
 “ flesh in the lust of uncleanness †.”——
 “ Know ye not that ye are the temple of
 “ God, and that the Spirit of God dwel-
 “ leth in you? If any man defile the temple
 “ of God, him shall God destroy ‡.”——
 “ Know ye not that your bodies are mem-
 “ bers of Christ? Shall I then take the
 “ members of Christ, and make them the
 “ members of an harlot? God forbid!—
 “ He that committeth fornication, sinneth
 “ against his own body §.”

There are divers kinds of leudness and
 impurity, which belong to this head, be-
 sides adultery and fornication in the com-
 mon gross sense. We read in scripture of

* Col. iii. 5, &c. † 2 Pet. ch. ii. 9, 10.
 ‡ 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. § Chap. vi. 15, &c.

SERMON IX.

61

“committing adultery in the HEART;”
and of some persons who have “EYES full
“of adultery, and that cannot cease from
“sin.” All obscene, lascivious or unchaste
WORDS, are also criminal: to which the
apostle refers, when he says, “Fornica-
“tion, and all uncleanness, let it not be
“once NAMED among you, as becometh
“saints: neither filthiness, nor foolish
“TALKING and JESTING, which are not
“convenient.” There are some still more
unnatural, shameful and brutal sins, which
belong to this head. For, as the apostle
observes, it is “even a shame to speak of
“those things which are done of some in
“secret.” I shall therefore spare at once
your modesty and my own, in not being
more particular——.

Now, my young brethren, if you are so-
BER-MINDED, you will keep yourselves pure
from all these abominations; against which
the wrath of God is so plainly revealed from
heaven. Particularly, you will avoid all

forbidden intercourse with lewd, prostitute, and infamous women; of whom there are too many. Wherever they are, they may justly be accounted the disgrace, not only of their own sex, but of human nature; the pests of society; the contempt and abhorrence of all good men; the daughters of satan, and the execration of the Almighty. And will you give your substance, your strength, your honor, to such infamous wretches as these; who thirst for your wealth, who lay wait for the precious life, and whose doors are the gates of hell! Would you dishonor the members of Christ!—would you defile the temple of God, which is holy, with such filthy and detestable, though probably painted and gilded idols!—Or, as to any of that sex, who are yet undebauched, would you be “first in the transgression?” Would, or could you, if you thought of the matter, be guilty of so dishonorable, so base, so cruel a thing, as to entice an innocent, virtuous young woman to forfeit her virtue and honor?—

at best to her shame and grief all her days; and, not improbably, to the utter loss of her reputation, and engaging her in such a course of life, as will ruin her both soul and body! O base, horrid, infamous deed! And if the person thus ensnared and ruined by you, should be one that had any regard for you; this would but increase the blackness and horror of the crime, by adding INGRATITUDE to it.

The infinitely wise and beneficent Author of nature, and of all the social passions, affections and instincts in mankind, has, by his express laws and institutions, made provision for the regular, virtuous and honorable gratification of them. And, in one very material instance, relative to the point in hand, the following passages of scripture will shew you at once, both what that course of life is, which He has ordained, and the great guilt and danger of deviating from it: I mean those very grave and sober words of the apostle Paul—“To avoid fornication, let EVERY man have

“his own wife, and EVERY woman her
 “own husband*.”—“Marriage is HO-
 “NORABLE in ALL, and the bed unde-
 “filed: but whoremongers and adulterers
 “God will judge†☞.”

* I Cor. vii. 2.

† Heb. xiii. 4.

☞ Among the numerous bad effects of pride and luxury in life, the prevention of MARRIAGE is not the least. There are many men in the world, who, though in circumstances to support a family comfortably and decently, will not comply with the order of God and nature, because they are not in a capacity to live in such affluence and splendor as they desire; such as their fathers live, or lived in: or such as many of their acquaintance live in: that is, in other words, because they have not much more of the world than they need. And the young, of the other amiable sex, having been brought up in a delicate, sumptuous way, will not marry, perhaps, till they have the offer of such matches, that they can immediately be maintained near, if not quite, in as genteel and grand a manner as that, in which they were brought up in their fathers houses; or that in which they see some of their coteremporaries live. These are facts, as to many

XIV. Let me remind you, in the next place, that all fraud and injustice are abso-

persons of both sexes. But how irrational is it, that young gentlemen and ladies should expect to begin the world with as much equipage and grandeur, or to live AT FIRST in as sumptuous a manner as their parents could well do AT LAST, after having, by the blessing of God on many years industry, acquired riches? Can any expect that their parents should either make away with themselves, or give up all to them while they live? One of these would be necessary in order to their living in the like affluence. Nor would even this suffice, except in a few cases. For most parents have more than one, two or three children; many have six, eight, ten, or more, to inherit their estates. So that giving up all to be divided amongst them, would not put them into such circumstances, as to enable them to live in the same manner in which they were brought up. Which, or something very near it, is what many seem to insist on, as the condition of their entering into the marriage state. Vain and extravagant imagination indeed! It is to expect what is naturally impossible. And the consequence hereof is, that many persons live all their days, and more ill, much the greater and better part of them, in an unnatural state, contrary to the ex-

lutely inconsistent with sobriety. Certainly, a dishonest, injurious person, cannot be a preps ordinance of God. And many of the men who live thus, betake themselves to such positively vicious courses, (it is needless to say in WHAT RESPECTS) as are at once dishonorable to themselves, ruinous to many persons of the other sex, of low condition, and as render both, the nuisances and disgrace of society.

Besides: the increase of mankind is hereby prevented. For as to those who live continently all their days in a single state, (whether many or few) they are the occasion of no addition to the numbers of society: they are "written childless;" and do not leave any to supply even their own places, when they are taken off the stage. And as to those who live otherwise, in a promiscuous or lawless concubinage; the experience of all ages has verified one part of the curse denounced against such persons, by the God of nature and order, viz. "They shall commit whoredom, "BUT THEY SHALL NOT INCREASE; because "they have left off to take heed to the Lord." [Hos. iv. 10.] That is, they shall not INCREASE in any sort of proportion to those who observe the divine institution of marriage.

sober one, in the sense of scripture; where-
in every species of dishonesty, unrighteous-
ness and fraud, is so frequently and so-
lemnly forbidden. "What! know ye not
"that the unrighteous shall not inherit the
"kingdom of God?"—

Some of you, my young brethren, may
be in your minority, under the immediate
care and government of your parents, or of
guardians. Others of you may be servants
or apprentices. Now, you may not, in

These are a few of the many civil and political
bad consequences of celibacy; one principal oc-
casion of which is that "pride of life, which is
"not of the Father, but of the world:"—a kind
of pride, which seems to be growing upon us in-
stead of abating, and threatens the worst of evils,
temporal and eternal. It is partly owing to this,
that not a few persons are arrived at such effron-
tery and impiety in their celibate, criminal way
of life, as even to DEFAME the original institu-
tion of Heaven, and that STATE which the Spirit
of God has since declared HONORABLE IN ALL.
This is one of the surest evidences of a grossly
depraved mind.

any respect, wrong or defraud either your parents, your guardians, or your masters, any more than another person, by taking any thing to your own use, which belongs to them: I mean, without their express permission, or their known general allowance and approbation. One might here apply, not improperly, the words of the apostle, though written originally with another view—"The heir as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father*." Some children and heirs may, perhaps, imagine that it is no crime for them clandestinely to take and use what belongs to their parents; but this is a great mistake. They have no right, no more than a servant has, to any thing besides what is given to, or allowed them; and it will be highly criminal in you to take, at your own discretion, any thing that is your parents. Neither may sons,

* Gal. iv. 1.

servants or apprentices be, in any respect, unfaithful to the trust reposed in them respectively. They are obliged to be punctually honest, upright and diligent in whatever is confided to their care, and in whatever they are employed by their parents or masters; faithfully regarding their orders and interest, as they will answer it to God.

I hardly need to add, after this, that you are all in general, both those that are minors, and those that are of age to act for yourselves, to be strictly just and upright in all your dealings and intercourse with others; doing to them "whatever you would that they should do to you."

For this is not only the law, the prophets, and the gospel of Christ; but the dictate of nature; and found, almost in the same words, in some of the heathen moralists. So that all injustice, iniquity and fraud towards man, of every kind and degree, is repugnant to the light of nature, as well as to christian sobriety, and the strict morals of the gospel. I may therefore dismiss

the present head, with this brief mention of it; only referring you to the holy scriptures, and to your own consciences, which will at once consent to every thing enjoined therein, relative to justice betwixt man and man.—I proceed therefore to observe, in the next place,

XV. That an AVARITIOUS, COVETOUS and WORLDLY disposition, or the immoderate desire and love of riches, is also repugnant to sobriety. “He that maketh haste
 “to be rich,” says Solomon, “shall not
 “be innocent.”—And, “they that will
 “be rich,” says the apostle Paul, “fall
 “into temptation, and a snare, and into
 “many foolish and hurtful lusts, which
 “drown men in destruction and perdition.
 “For the love of money is the root of all
 “evil; which while some coveted after,
 “they have erred from the faith, and
 “pierced themselves through with many
 “sorrows.” And our blessed Saviour has
 said, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures
 “upon earth”—“Take heed and beware

“of covetousness.” He speaks of a strong attachment to the world, as absolutely inconsistent with true religion; saying, “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. YE CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON.”

Covetousness is indeed commonly and justly accounted the vice rather of old age than of youth. However, instances of it even in the latter, are not so rare and extraordinary, as to render a caution of this nature superfluous or inexpedient in a discourse to young men. The apostle John, to be sure, did not think such admonitions needless for them. For it is more particularly and directly to young men, that he addresses himself thus in his first epistle—“I have written unto you, young men—Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him—And the world passeth away,

"and the lust thereof, but he that doeth
"the will of God, abideth for ever." need

As I just now intimated to you, there
are some examples of a covetous, worldly
temper in young men: and there is one
melancholy instance hereof recorded in the
New Testament. The story is related by
three of the evangelists *, without any con-
siderable variation; and it is particularly
worthy of your serious attention. This
unhappy young man came to our Saviour
with an apparent, and doubtless some real
concern, about the salvation of his soul,
saying, "Good master, what good thing
"shall I do that I may inherit eternal
"life?" By what follows, it appears that
he was free from all gross and scandalous
vices, in the usual sense of these terms.
And one of the evangelists says, that "Je-
"sus beholding him, loved him." How-
ever, our Lord knowing at the same time,

* Mat. ch. xix, Mark ch. x, and Luke
ch. xviii.

that the love of this world reigned in his heart; perceiving also, that he had far too high an opinion of his own virtues and righteousness; and being willing to prove him, and shew him to himself, said, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." But the manner in which he received this counsel and admonition, and his conduct thereon, as related in the next verse, shews that even this apparently serious young man, who was, in some respects, beloved by our Lord, still preferred a present treasure on earth, to a future one in heaven, that faileth not. For it is said, "But when the young man heard that saying he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions." From whence our Saviour took occasion to admonish all that were present, concerning the deceitfulness of riches, the danger attending them, and the fatal consequences of a worldly mind; saying, "Verily, I say unto you, that a rich man shall

“hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Or, as it is expressed in another evangelist, “How hardly shall they that have riches, enter into the kingdom of God!”

Now, if you are truly wise, you will not follow the example of this unhappy young man; but consider it as left upon record for your warning: and not suffer the love of gold that perisheth, to reign in your hearts, instead of the love of Christ and of God, and of the true riches;—that far more excellent, enduring substance and treasure in the heavens, “where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” The inordinate love of riches is absolutely inconsistent with christian sobriety. There is hardly any surer evidence of a sordid and insane mind than this: so far is it from being compatible with a truly sober one.

It is not the design of these scriptural counsels and warnings respecting riches,

that you should have absolutely no regard for them; much less, that you should wholly neglect all worldly affairs, business and commerce, under a pretence of being heavenly-minded: a notion which some lazy people, and dreaming enthusiasts have espoused; thinking to be subsisted in idleness by the labor and alms of others. Wealth is the gift of God, and considered in scripture as one of those worldly blessings, for which men ought to be thankful to the Father of lights. It is therefore, though a trial, yet a real good; and not to be absolutely despised. In the possession of a wife and good man, it may contribute not only to the comfort of his own life; but enable him to do much good in the world in divers ways, particularly in the honourable capacity of God's almoner to the poor: while fools, or wicked men are often the more unhappy themselves, and do hurt to others, by means of those riches which they abuse. Solomon recommends an honest industry, as the natural and appointed means of providing a comfortable livelihood; saying, "Go to the ant, thou

“luggard; consider her ways, and be wise:
 “which having no guide, overseer, or
 “ruler, provideth her meat in the summer,
 “and gathereth her food in the harvest.”

The apostle Paul says, as from the Lord,
 that “if any will not work, neither should
 “they eat.” There is much more to the
 same purpose in the New Testament: and
 it would be a great perversion of our Sa-
 viour’s words—“Labor not for the meat
 “that perisheth;”—“Take no thought
 “for the morrow;”—and such-like admo-
 nitions, to understand them as prohibiting
 that prudent care and diligence, in order
 to provide for ourselves, and “that we
 “may have to give to him that needeth,”
 which are positively enjoined in many other
 parts of scripture.

The true sense of scripture upon this
 head, is in general this; that though you
 ought to be industrious in some honest
 course of life, and to be thankful to God,
 if he bestows riches upon you; yet you are
 always to regard this world, and the pe-
 rishing riches of it, in due subordination to

the other, and to those far greater and better things, which God has promised to them that love him:—that you should not be immoderately set in the pursuit of riches, nor gripe them too fast when acquired, so as to withhold your alms from the proper objects of it:—that you should not trust in them, but in the living God, who “giveth us richly all things to enjoy:”—that you should make such a wise and reasonable use of them, as is agreeable both to nature, and to the will of God; and be ready to part with them at his call, in hope of a better and more enduring substance; even those things that are “above, where Jesus Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.” Neither are you to imagine yourselves sober-minded, as Christians are obliged to be, till the temper of your minds is conformable to such sober maxims as these: for there is nothing in them that savours, in the least degree, of SUPERSTITION or ENTHUSIASM; which are so far from being the characteristics of a sober mind, that they are directly repugnant thereto. And this leads

me to observe more particularly, in the last place, what was hinted in the preceding discourse.

XVI. That all **ENTHUSIASTIC** notions, and **SUPERSTITIOUS** practices, stand in opposition to christian sobriety; And ought to be guarded against. A sober mind is not, surely, an insane, fanciful, over-heated or raving one; but a sound, composed and rational mind; a mind well-informed with the knowledge of God, and of true religion; and, upon rational principles, or proper grounds of conviction of the truth, excellency and importance of christianity, firmly attached to it, as it was preached by Christ and his apostles. All enthusiastic rants and conceits, all superstitious notions and practices; I mean, all such as are warranted neither by reason, nor by the holy scriptures, are therefore repugnant to sobriety.

That sobriety of mind ought to be considered in opposition to all such fancies,

and religious madness, is very obvious from one passage of scripture at least, directly in point. It is in the Acts of the apostles *, and was referred to before. We there find the apostle Paul giving a particular account of his conversion to the faith of Christ, before King Agrippa, and Festus the governor; apologizing for himself, and speaking of the truth and evidences of Christianity. "And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art BESIDE THYSELF; much learning doth make thee MAD." Whether Festus spake sincerely or ironically about the apostle's learning, is not at present material: it is evident that he thought him now disordered in his mind, and a religious, raving enthusiast. Upon which the apostle calmly and respectfully replied, "I am not MAD, most noble Festus; but speak forth THE WORDS OF TRUTH and SOBERNESS." In which answer, you perceive that speaking the words of "truth and soberness," stands

I had liberty of mind to give such answers
as I thought fit.

Chap. xxvi. 24, 25.

in opposition to the reproachful charge as to his being "beside himself" and "mad." One obvious remark upon this piece of history, is, that men of dark and depraved minds may MIS-CALL truth and soberness, madness: for such men receive not the things of the spirit of God; which are foolishness and madness to them. This, however, does not in the least invalidate, but rather confirms the other observation, that REAL enthusiasm, or religious madness, actually stands in opposition to true sobriety of mind, how often soever one may be MISTAKEN for the other.

If therefore, you aspire to be sober-minded, you are always, and in all things, to be governed by rational evidence, and the genuine doctrines and duties of christianity; and to be upon your guard against all wild notions and conceits; all superstition and enthusiasm, whether in principle or in practice.—Though there have been times and places, wherein, it seemed, by the preaching chiefly in vogue, to be an established

maxim, that peop'e, and particularly the young, must be first put "beside themselves," and made "mad," by a furious application to their passions, with little or no solid instruction to their minds, in order to make them sober ! Yea, sobriety of mind seems to have been thought by many, to consist chiefly in an heated imagination, in wild, unscriptural fancies, and in such consequential practises, both in respect of religion, and the affairs of common life, as are directly repugnant to all true sobriety, or a sound mind. And young people need to be particularly cautioned against these delusions and infatuations ; being, through inexperience, the warmth of their blood, and the strength of their passions, peculiarly exposed to them ; especially when recommended to them either by a very soft and delicate, or a tragical, boisterous and outrageous address.

Superstition and enthusiasm are not, indeed, commonly considered as VICIOUS, or

any ways CRIMINAL in their nature; but rather only as innocent human infirmities. But it is not easy to see, why they should be treated with so much tenderness, except in some particular cases, wherein they appear to have their origin in corporeal disorders. When this is the case, the subjects of them are to be pitied, like other unhappy people under a total or partial distraction, arising from similar disorders in the animal frame. But such cases as these being excepted, they are real and great vices of the mind; I mean, wherever they are found in a great degree. For they strongly imply a criminal misuse of the understanding, and of the word of God; which, being rightly used, would effectually preserve people from these errors and delusions. A person that makes such use of his reason, and of the holy scriptures, as he ought in duty to make, never did, never will, never can fall into the errors of a raving, wild enthusiasm; so contrary to all true sobriety, and so fruitful of mischief in

the world. For all which mischiefs the enthusiast is as much accountable, as the drunkard, and the man whose anger has got the better of his reason, are for the disorders and outrages committed by them respectively.

Enthusiasts are commonly full of pride, self-conceit, wrath and bitterness. All their dreams and reveries are sacred with them, all divine: and they who dare to contradict or dispute them, are of consequence hereticks, unconverted, wicked men, the enemies of God. Hence rash judging and condemning: hence fatal breaches in families, amongst neighbours, in churches, in civil societies: hence envying and strife, and every evil work. Enthusiasm is generally outrageous and cruel as the grave, under a pretence of zeal for religion and the glory of God. They who are possessed of this evil spirit in a great degree, commonly think they can neither say nor do too much against those, upon whom, in the pride and naughtiness,

of their hearts, they have waged war, as unorthodox enemies to the most High: Conceiting that by "killing them, they would do God service." Almost all great enthusiasts evidently discover a disposition to be persecutors, and to destroy their opposers, if they dared, and had it in their power: unhappily mistaking a kind of possession for INSPIRATION, and the loss of humanity for the acquisition of a DIVINE NATURE!

Enthusiasm has, perhaps, been productive of as much evil in the world, as the most flagrant and acknowledged immoralities: yea, it leads naturally and directly to such immoralities; as was intimated before. It is directly the reverse of "the wisdom that is from above," in its nature and effects; though mistaken for it. It is neither pure, nor peaceable, nor gentle, nor easy to be entreated; it is not full of mercy, or of any good fruits; it is not without partiality, nor without hypocrisy; neither are the fruits of righteousness

sown in peace by enthusiasts, but the seeds of all unrighteousness, in divisions and discord. What dreadful confusions and calamities enthusiasm has sometimes occasioned, nearly, if not quite to the overturning of kingdoms, is known to those who are conversant in history. And let me add, that if our own country has divers times been the wretched theatre of such-like disorders and miseries in a great degree, it will render my giving you a very particular caution against enthusiasm, the more expedient. Let me therefore, in the fear of God, and in friendship to you, warn you never to forget that you are reasonable creatures. There is nothing, which is not founded in reason, truth, and in the holy word of God, which is the highest reason, that in any measure deserves the name of religion. You are always to make the holy scriptures the rule both of your faith and practice, exercising your best reason in discovering the true sense thereof; never admitting any thing as religious truth or duty, but what is agreeable thereto; and let me add, giving

your chief attention to the plain, indisputable doctrines and duties of christianity, which are certainly of the greatest importance. The observation of these counsels will, by the blessing of God, be a sufficient security to you against all enthusiastic, superstitious notions and practices, so contrary to sobriety of mind, and of such fatal consequence, as has been represented.

Thus, my beloved young brethren, I have particularly mentioned, and warned you against, some of the principal of those follies and vices, those sinful excesses and irregularities, both in principle and practice, which stand in opposition to christian sobriety. An ugly, deformed picture, set by the side of a fair and beautiful one, serves as a foil thereto; making its beauty the more conspicuous, and recommending it to the best advantage. It is therefore hoped that what has been said of irreligion, folly and vice, in this and my other discourses, will serve to illustrate and recommend to you that pure and undefiled reli-

gion, which was explained to you in some preceding ones. If any of you have unhappily, heretofore, preferred vice to virtue, and impiety to godliness; it was doubtless, in part at least, because you did not clearly discern the real beauty of the one, and the deformity of the other. I have endeavoured to place them both in such a light, that you can hardly help doing it now, unless the god of this world has sadly blinded your eyes, lest the light of the glorious gospel should appear to them. May He that at first said, "Let there be light;" and at whose word it "shined out of darkness, shine into all your hearts, to give you the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ!"

I have endeavoured faithfully, and in the plainest manner, by God's blessing concurring, to lead you to the knowledge and love of the truth, free from all human inventions, refinements, and commandments of men, whatsoever; in humble imitation of the holy apostle, who said,—“ Seeing

"we have received this ministry, we faint
 "not: but have renounced the hidden
 "things of dishonesty, not walking in
 "craftiness, nor handling the word of God
 "deceitfully, but by manifestation of the
 "truth commending ourselves to every
 "man's conscience in the sight of God."
 If you are convinced in your own con-
 sciences, as I doubt not but you are, that I
 have been recommending to you nothing
 but sober truth, and sober religion: if you
 are also perswaded, that I have been warn-
 ing you against nothing but what is con-
 trary to sound doctrine, and to christian
 sobriety, from a sincere desire of your eter-
 nal happiness: then take heed how you re-
 ject these friendly counsels and warnings.
 For in such a case, "he that despiseth, de-
 "spiseth not man, but God."—If you are
 "wise, you will be wise for yourselves;
 "but if you scorn, you alone shall bear
 "it!"
 * 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2.

How you have lived in times past, is best known to God and to yourselves. However, if any of you are conscious to yourselves, that you have not hitherto walked according to the laws of christian sobriety; I must admonish you to repent of all your violations of them; and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, by forsaking your past sins, and living soberly, righteously and godly for the time to come; that so you may stand acquitted in the great day, instead of being "condemned with the world."

Let me, on the other hand, exhort those of you that are already sober-minded, to persevere in well-doing; to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and to perfect holiness in the fear of God.—"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be

“any virtue, if there be any praise, think
 “of these things. Those things which
 “ye have both learned, and received, and
 “heard—do; and the God of peace shall
 “be with you *.”

* Eph. chap. iv.

THE REASONABLENESS THEREOF.
 THEIR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION; THE
 CONSTANT GOODNESS OF GOD TO
 THEM; HIS CORRECTIVE VISITA-
 TIONS; AND THEIR VOWS AND GOOD
 RESOLUTIONS IN TIMES OF TROUBLE.
 “Things are honest, whatsoever things are
 “good, whatsoever things are pure, what-
 “soever things are lovely, whatsoever
 “things are of good report; if there be

S E R M O N IX

S E R M O N X.

Y O U N G M E N

EXHORTED TO

S O B R I E T Y

B Y

V A R I O U S C O N S I D E R A T I O N S,

A S

THE REASONABLENESS THEREOF;
THEIR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION; THE
CONSTANT GOODNESS OF GOD TO
THEM; HIS CORRECTIVE VISITA-
TIONS; AND THEIR VOWS AND GOOD
RESOLUTIONS IN TIMES OF TROUBLE.

S E R M O N X.

TITUS II. 6.

Young Men likewise exhort to be sober-minded.

MY young brethren, in the first discourse upon this subject, a variety of observations were made upon the text, by way of introduction to the main design.

In the four next discourses, the nature of christian sobriety was somewhat distinctly explained, and cursorily recommended to you.

In the four last discourses, some of the many sins, follies and criminal excesses which are contrary to sobriety, were particularly mentioned to you; from all which you were warned to abstain.

S E R M O N X.

T I T U S ii. 6.

YOUNG MEN *likewise exhort to be sober-minded.*

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I have spoken of nothing as a truth to be believed, or a duty to be practised by you, as a branch of this sobriety, without assigning some reason or reasons for it, how briefly soever. Neither, on the other hand, has any thing been mentioned as repugnant to sobriety, without offering something to your consideration, by way of dissuasive from it. So that I have, in effect, been exhorting you to be sober-minded, while my professed design was rather only to explain what is intended thereby, and to shew you what is inconsistent therewith. But it has been my intention all along, by the will of God,

Thirdly, More largely and distinctly to exhort you to this sobriety of mind, and to dissuade you from the contrary.

I shall, accordingly, now proceed to this branch of my design, by laying before you such considerations and arguments of various kinds, as may be effectual to persuade you to be SOBER-MINDED, by the blessing

of God concurring; or else, if they are disregarded, will leave you the more excusable. Which I pray God, may not be the case with any of you: though if it should, it will be nothing that is unusual;—nothing but what often happened of old, under the preaching of the apostles themselves, who were so eminently faithful to God, and to the souls of men. Conscious of this fidelity, they left the EVENT, the success of their labour of love, with God; in full assurance of his gracious approbation, whatever that might be. Whether their hearers received and relished the word preached, to their salvation, or disrelished and rejected it, to their destruction; yet they knew their own conduct with respect to both, would be acceptable to God, who is pleased with the faithfulness of his servants, whether successful or not. These are the sentiments, which one of the chief of the apostles expresses in the following words: “We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are

“ the favor of death unto death ; and to
 “ the other the favor of life unto life—For
 “ we are not as many which corrupt the
 “ word of God ; but as of sincerity, but
 “ as of God, so speak we in Christ *.”

Let me briefly premise a few things here,
 before I proceed to the proposed exhorta-
 tion. And,

I. An exhortation to sobriety, implies
 the use of argument, of sober and solid rea-
 sons, addressed to the understanding. Ge-
 neral counsels, or loud pathetic exclama-
 tions, addressed solely to the passions ; or
 merely calling upon people to be sober-
 minded, without such intelligible motives
 as are adapted to influence a reasonable
 mind, does not deserve the name of chris-
 tian exhortation : it is but empty harangue
 and declamation ; from which no good and
 lasting effects can be expected, how much
 soever persons may be moved and agitated

* 2 Cor. ch. ii.

thereby for a time. I shall therefore consider you as reasonable creatures; and make use of such arguments and considerations, as are adapted to work upon a rational mind.

2. These arguments will be of a general nature; respecting sobriety of mind in that large, comprehensive sense, in which it was explained in the preceding discourses, rather than any single branches of it. For the particular parts or branches thereof, have had so much said upon them respectively already, that it is the less necessary to insist upon them now. And it will be more expedient and useful, to urge upon you sobriety of mind in general, considered as containing all those particulars that have been separately spoken of.

3. Though some of these arguments will be of less weight than others; yet none of them, it is hoped, will be unworthy to be mentioned in a grave discourse, or undeserving of your regard. There is nothing

of any real weight, that can be said upon this subject, but what may properly claim attention, in proportion to that weight. And it must needs be, that in a great number of arguments for sobriety, there must be a difference in respect of their importance: they cannot all be of the same, or equal force; though they may all be according to truth, nature, reason and scripture. Some of those which I shall offer to your consideration, are, I think, as weighty as the heart of man can conceive; and none of them, I hope, superficial, fanciful or unsolid. But you shall judge of them yourselves: for, I neither claim nor desire a blind, implicit deference to any thing which I say, even from the young; but aim at giving you rational conviction: without which there can be no religion, whether in principle or practice, becoming reasonable creatures; nor, consequently, any thing that deserves the name of christian sobriety, either in the young or the old.

no. These arguments will have a primary respect to those persons, who are not yet sober-minded; being designed and adapted both to awaken and to encourage such; to shew them, on one hand, the fatal consequences of persevering in their sinful courses; and on the other, the reasonableness, and many advantages of sobriety. But,

5. Though the following considerations will be chiefly adapted to the state of the vicious; yet they may be of use to all those persons, whether old or young, that are already sober-minded; by confirming them in the faith and practice of religion; by encouraging them to “go on unto perfection;” and shewing them the danger, either of a total or partial decline from “the right ways of the Lord.” It is hoped, there are some of the young who are truly sober-minded; who may yet greatly need encouragement and confirmation in the faith, and in the continued practice of their duty. Neither would I

have it supposed, that I conclude there are none such, because I address myself more especially to those unhappy young men that are, or may be, of a contrary character.

These things being premised, my young brethren, what I would first of all propose to your consideration, is,

I. That this sobriety, considered in one entire view as it has been explained, is a most REASONABLE thing. Reason is a noble prerogative which God has given you; whereby you are distinguished from the fowls of heaven, and from the beasts of the field; from the horse and mule which have no understanding. It should, therefore, be your ambition, an ambition truly laudable, to act up to your rational character in all respects; and never to degrade or dishonor yourselves, by a conduct repugnant thereto. This, in general, you will all readily acknowledge. And, to apply it to the grand point in view; what

is there,—what can there be, so reasonable, as that you should be SOBER-MINDED, or truly religious? This is the sum of human reason, of human wisdom, reduced to practice: for which cause, in the writings of Solomon, wisdom is only another name for religion, or sobriety; and folly, only another name for irreligion and vice. There is nothing that deserves the title of wisdom, in comparison of the former, which so much excels every thing else that passes under the same name;—nothing which deserves the title of folly, in comparison of the latter, which so much surpasseth all other folly. So the wise man explains himself, when he says, “the foolishness of fools is folly;” i. e. the folly of irreligious, wicked men, is emphatically folly, the greatest that can be conceived of: all other folly is a kind of wisdom, in comparison of this. On the other hand, all other pretended wisdom is but folly, in comparison of knowing God and keeping his commandments.

None, certainly, but a fool, can say in heart, "There is no God." And if there be a God, the Creator and Lord of all, perfect in power, wisdom, righteousness, &c. is it not evidently a most reasonable thing to love, reverence, honor, trust in and obey him, even with all the heart, soul, strength and mind? What greater folly, what surer mark of insanity can there possibly be, than to contemn or disregard, to affront and disobey the only living and true God? Will you abuse language so much, as to call any One that does so, a reasonable and wise man! Moreover: if Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into this world to enlighten, to redeem and save it, according to the scripture-account, of which there is rational, conclusive, abundant evidence; then, certainly, you are bound in reason to believe in him; to respect and honour him in the high relation of a "mediator between God and men;" to submit yourselves to his teaching and authority, to believe his words, to trust in him, and to obey all the laws of his king-

dom, or the commandments of God as promulgated by him, in the name, and by the authority of the Father. What can be more, I will not now say, wicked and impious, but more irrational and foolish, than either to reject those many "infallible" proofs, which there are of Christ's divine mission, and the truth of his gospel, or to despise him, and to disobey his commandments, which are so holy, just and good?

There are, comparatively speaking, but few things required of you as duties, in and by the gospel, but what even the light of nature shews to be such; but few things forbidden as sinful thereby, but what even your own reason and consciences might tell you, are wrong and criminal. This is true of all the moral precepts and prohibitions of the gospel; which are far the greater part. The reasonableness of these, considered in their own nature, independently of any revelation, is obvious to those who will duly attend to them.

As to the other commandments of the gospel, which do not belong to the head of moral precepts; the things required or forbidden in them, are mostly such as have a close and immediate connexion with the truth of Christianity speculatively considered; or with the doctrine concerning Jesus Christ, the redemption of the world by him, his resurrection, ascension into heaven, the power committed to him by the Father, and his future coming in glory to judge the world. So that if this scriptural account of things is true, as it most certainly is, the reasonableness and fitness of what is required in the gospel in consequence of, and as grounded upon them, is plain and undeniable. If there are any exceptions, they must be those two positive institutions of the gospel, baptism and the Lord's supper. For as to public social worship in general; the reasonableness thereof has been acknowledged by all civilized nations; none but an atheist, or mere savage, can even doubt the propriety of it. And as to those two positive precepts; to say

the least, there is nothing absurd, nothing irrational in them. Nay, there is an apparent propriety in them, when considered with relation to their known, declared ends: one of them, baptism, is a visible sign of our dedication to God in Christ, and both an emblem and means of that death to sin, of that newness of life, and that moral purity, to which we are called by the gospel, "through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience;" from whence it is called, in this epistle to Titus, "the washings of regeneration," and joined with the "renewing of the Holy Ghost *." The other of these institutions, the Lord's supper, is a commemorative rite of that most wonderful and interesting event, the death of the Son of God upon the cross, in human flesh, for the salvation of sinful men: and it is, at the same time, a natural memento, both of the grace of God to us, and of the obligations which we are under to love and obey him. The Lord's supper,

being considered in this scriptural light, is evidently a very decent, proper and reasonable institution; adapted, in its nature, to answer the most excellent moral ends; such ends as all but atheists must acknowledge to be important; i. e. if gratitude and love to God, righteousness, charity, purity, and universal holiness, are of any importance.

It appears then, my young brethren, That that sobriety of mind to which you are exhorted, consisting in a due regard to God, to Jesus Christ, and to the divine commandments, according to the faith and requisitions of the gospel, is, in the whole of it, highly reasonable; the most rational thing in the world. I would not, on any account, exhort you to do what is unreasonable in the least degree; either to believe things without proper evidence of their truth, or to act absurdly or irrationally in any other respect. To believe God's word and to keep it, is, surely, neither of these. There is abundant proof of whatsoever you are exhorted to receive as reli-

gious truth: and that pious, holy and virtuous life, to which you are called, is the most fit, decent and rational life, that any man on earth can lead. Neither can you reject the gospel, or live a life of impiety, sin and vice, without contradicting, in the most disgraceful, the most dishonorable manner, that reason which God has given you, and on which you may justly value yourselves. I shall therefore close this head of exhortation, with the words of the apostle Paul: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, which is your REASONABLE SERVICE *."

II. The far greater part of you, if not all, have, through the goodness of God, been favoured with a virtuous and religious EDUCATION. You have, even from your childhood, been instructed in the great and fundamental principles of religion, both

natural and revealed. I might say to you as the apostle did to Timothy, then a young man, that "from children you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus;"—those scriptures which, having been given by inspiration of God, are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that you might be perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Having been dedicated to God in your baptism, you were early taught to read these instructive, sacred pages; receiving at once, or together, the first lessons of piety and of human literature. You have also, probably, often heard the sacred oracles read in the families in which you were brought up, in the schools which you frequented, and in the house of God. You have had the principal doctrines and duties pertaining to godly sobriety, often inculcated upon you by your parents, your school-masters and your ministers, in private and in public. You have had *line upon line,*

“and precept upon precept.” I may add, that many of you at least, have had virtuous and good examples set before you;—examples of godliness and christian sobriety, in the families in which you were brought up.

Now these are great favors in providence, by which you are laid under some special obligations to be SOBER-MINDED, in addition to those which arise from the reasonableness of the thing itself, in its own nature. Your guilt will of consequence be greatly aggravated, if you should not know God and Jesus Christ; if you should not remember your Creator, honor, love and obey him, after having been thus instructed, admonished, and trained up in the way that you should go, from your early childhood. Those unhappy persons who were born and brought up in places, where the light of the gospel does not shine, or at best shines but with faint, broken, and just-glimmering rays;—where they have had far less and fewer advantages for knowing and doing

their duty, than you have enjoyed; (which is the case of much the greater part of the young men now in the christian world;) such persons as these, I say, though really inexcusable if they are not sober-minded, are yet far less criminal, less culpable in the sight of God and man, than you will be, should you continue in the practice of vice and folly, after having enjoyed these superior religious advantages. I pretend to no peculiar sagacity or penetration; but I know so much of the human heart, and the power of natural conscience, that I scruple not to say positively, That that faithful witness for God which is in you, testifies to the truth and justice of what I here say, if you lend me so much of your attention, as barely to understand it.

You know, my beloved young brethren, and cannot but know, that you are laid under peculiar, and very strong obligations to sobriety, by the advantages of your birth, childhood and youth, before-mentioned; and that your guilt will be proportionably

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aggravated in the sight of God, to whom all hearts are open, and by whom all actions, with their particular circumstances, are weighed in an equal ballance, if instead of being sober-minded, you should persevere in vice and impiety. Let me therefore exhort you seriously to consider of this matter; not only while you are present before God, but after you are gone from his house. If you duly reflect upon these privileges of your birth and education, and having the things which belong to your peace, so early and frequently inculcated upon you; it cannot but have some good influence upon your minds, and future behaviour. And, for your warning not to contemn and disregard these things, let me remind you of the sad and shameful confession of a foolish, heedless and obstinate YOUNG MAN; with which I close the present argument. It runs thus: "How
 "have I hated instruction, and my heart
 "despised reproof? and have not obeyed
 "the voice of my teachers, nor in-

“clined mine ear to them that instructed
“me ! *”

III. If you reflect upon the goodness of God to you in your DAILY PRESERVATION, or in the course of his common providence ; this will have a tendency to make you sober-minded. The goodness of God, even in this view of it, ought to lead you to repentance ; which is the principal end thereof. Ever since you were so fearfully and wonderfully made by him in the womb, and from your birth to the present time, you have been cast upon him as your guardian, your support, your friend, your Father. He has daily loaded you with his benefits, and crowned you with loving-kindness and tender mercies. How numerous are the blessings which he hath bestowed upon you ? From how many evils and dangers has he delivered you, during your feeble infant state, in childhood, and in your riper years ?

* Prov. chap. iv.

Now, God having thus protected, nourished and brought you up as children; may not heaven and earth well be astonished, if you continue to “rebel against him,” instead of making him that return of gratitude, love, and obedience, which is so justly required of you! This is a plain and very forcible argument: nor can it fail to have great weight in your minds, if there is any gratitude and ingenuity in them. But as this is a very common argument, I will not enlarge upon it; but close it by reminding you of a solemn exhortation of the apostle, relative to the point—“Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath, against the day of wrath—*p”

IV. Notwithstanding the goodness and kindness of God to you, in the common

* Rom. chap. ii.

course of his providence, it is likely that he has often REPROVED, WARNED and CORRECTED you, by the visitations of that same wise and good providence;—by sickness, by the death of parents, or near relations, friends and companions; or by other afflictive and grievous dispensations. Now all these things are to be considered as kind chastenings and admonitions to you; designed in providence to awaken you to serious reflexion, and as one means of begetting in you that true wisdom and sobriety, to which you are exhorted. And will you “despise the chastening of the Lord?” This were, in some respects, an evidence of greater stubbornness and hardness of heart, than despising the more obvious effects of his goodness: I say, the MORE OBVIOUS effects of it; because these are as truly the effects of divine goodness, as any known and acknowledged blessings. You have had fathers of your flesh, to whom you gave reverence when they corrected you: should you not much rather give reverence, and be in subjection to the

Father of your spirits, under his correcting hand, that you may live? They, possibly, sometimes corrected you after their own pleasure, to gratify a sudden, transient resentment, rather than with a truly parental kindness, that you might become the wiser and happier thereby. But when God corrects his children, his offspring, it is always kindly meant for their profit; that they may be taught to fear and obey him; that they may become partakers of his holiness, and be made wise unto salvation.

How highly culpable will you then be, if you refuse to “hear the rod and him that appointed it?”—if you despise, not only the goodness of God in the common preservation and bounties of his providence, but in the corrective visitations of it; and will not learn righteousness and sobriety thereby; but go on hardening your hearts against the fear of the Almighty! Let me close this head of exhortation therefore, with the words of Solomon—“He that
“being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck,

“shall suddenly be destroyed, and that
“without remedy*.”

V. It is probable that most, or all of you, in certain SEASONS of DANGER and DISTRESS, when you apprehended death was not far from you, have had your consciences greatly alarmed. On these occasions your foolish and sinful courses have probably been brought to your remembrance, so as to fill you with anxiety and guilty fears. At these times you have doubtless had your hearts and eyes turned to God, if you dared to look up to him, in importunate desires and prayers for mercy and preservation; accompanied with secret PROMISES and solemn vows of amendment; and of devoting yourselves to the service of God, if you might be spared a while longer. I believe there are, comparatively, but few persons, old or young, especially amongst those who have been religiously educated, but what have had ex-

• Prov. xxix. 1.

perience of such seasons of distress, awakening and fear; and of such workings of conscience, such vows and good resolutions at those times.

For example: people are generally thus alarmed in times of contagious and mortal sickness; when they see their friends and acquaintance carried away “as with a flood,” and especially when they themselves are, by sickness, brought “nigh unto death.” Such reflections as the above-mentioned, are usually awakened in vicious persons, on these occasions. They that are, by their office, called often to the beds of the sick, as their advisers and comforters, have frequent opportunities, without being INQUISITIVE, to be informed of their true sentiments in these serious hours. And the sentiments usually expressed at such times by wicked men, and not uncommonly even by the good, correspond to those words of the psalmist in his sickness:—“Surely, every man is vanity.—Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry, hold

“not thy peace from my tears—O spare
“me, that I may recover strength, before
“I go hence, and be no more.” They
also that go down to the sea in ships, that
do business on the mighty waters, and are
acquainted with the perils attending that
way of life, know the fears and distresses
often occasioned thereby. They are de-
scribed in one of the psalms thus—“The
“Lord commandeth, and raiseth up the
“stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves
“—they mount up to the heavens, they
“go down to the depths; their soul is
“melted because of trouble—and they are
“at their wit’s end. Then they cry unto
“the Lord in their trouble.”—There are
sometimes also storms, tempests and perils
by land, as well as on the seas, at which
most people are greatly alarmed; and have
their thoughts and desires turned for a
time, towards God and religion, in prayers,
vows and pious resolutions. Earthquakes
are almost universally terrifying; and we all
in general know the sentiments of people
on these occasions, by repeated observation

and experience. There are also the dangers of war; and many others, which are common in the course of human life. On all such occasions, the generality of people are in a degree of perturbation and fear; imploring the divine preservation, and making such-like promises and resolutions as have been mentioned.

Now, let me ask you some serious questions, my young brethren, relative to these times of danger, fear and anxiety. In the first place then, have you not had experience of such seasons yourselves? if not of all, yet at least of some of them? And were not your sentiments on these occasions, such in general as have been mentioned? Were not your consciences troubled within you? Did you not greatly fear death, and the consequences of it? Did you not, at least silently, implore God's sparing mercy, with vows of ETERNAL gratitude and obedience to him? Taking this for granted, let me ask again; Must you not even now acknowledge, that those

were reasonable reflexions; and that, in general, you had just cause for them? Were they not the result, the dictates of nature, and of sound reason, though not the effect of long premeditation? Or do you now consider them all as weak, childish fancies, and superstitious imaginations? You cannot think them so, unless you suppose that all thoughts of God, religion, virtue and vice, and of future rewards and punishments, are also childish, superstitious fancies. I have too good an opinion of you, to suspect the latter; and must therefore conclude, that you suppose you had some proper ground for such apprehensions as those mentioned. Let me then ask you again, Whether God was not kind and gracious to you, in hearing your cries at those times, and saving you from these dangers? Have not many of you reason to think, that if you had then been taken out of this world, according to your fears, you would now have been miserable in another? And do you not think, that you ought forever to bear in remembrance, both those

perils, and these mercies and deliverances; together with your vows and good resolutions, so as to fulfil them, by living soberly, righteously and godly in the world? If you should forget or break these promises and vows, or continue to live unmindful of God and your duty, would not this be a great aggravation of your guilt? Or, though you should be thus forgetful and ungrateful; yet do ye not suppose that God remembers these things, to call you to an account another day? And if he should do so, what excuse, what apology, what tolerable plea could you make for yourselves?

These, my young brethren, are indeed serious questions; but they are not superstitious or fanciful ones: neither can they be thought so by any, excepting those who are so hardened in infidelity and vice, as to conceit that every thing which is grave and serious, or which supposes the truth of religion, ought to be discarded under the name of superstition.—Know then, that

your vows and promises are upon record in heaven! Be assured also, that your sinful and ungrateful violations of them are so likewise; and will never be erased without repentance and reformation,—except, perhaps, when your names are blotted out of “the book of life,” and “from under heaven!” O then, forget not the day of your calamity; forget not your vows; forget not the sparing mercy of God to you; lest another time of distress and anguish should come upon you even “as a whirlwind;” when tho’ you shall call upon him, he will not answer!—I shall close this head of exhortation, and the discourse, by reminding you of the conduct of the royal psalmist; his grateful remembrance of God’s favors in times of trouble, and of his own vows therein: an example worthy of your sober attention and imitation—“The sorrows of death compassed me,” says he, “and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. “Then called I upon the name of the “Lord—O Lord, I beseech thee deliver

"my soul! Gracious is the Lord, and
 "righteous! yea, our God is merciful—I
 "was brought low, and he helped me. Re-
 "turn unto thy rest, O my soul; for the
 "Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.
 "For thou hast delivered my soul from
 "death, mine eyes from tears, and my
 "feet from falling. I will walk before
 "the Lord in the land of the living—I
 "will pay my vows unto the Lord, now
 "in the presence of all his people." And
 again, in another psalm: "I will pay thee
 "my vows which my lips have uttered,
 "and my mouth hath spoken when I was
 "in trouble. I will offer unto thee burnt-
 "sacrifices."



My dear friend, I have been thinking of you very much lately, and wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are well and happy. I have been very busy lately, but I have managed to find some time to write to you. I have been thinking of you very much lately, and wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are well and happy. I have been very busy lately, but I have managed to find some time to write to you.

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S E R M O N XI.

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S E R M O N XI.

TITUS ii. 6.

YOUNG MEN *likewise exhort to be sober-minded.*

MY young brethren, in the last discourse, I proposed somewhat largely, to exhort you to cherish, and cultivate that SOBER-MINDEDNESS, here required in the text.

In prosecution hereof, I laid before you several arguments, which with the divine blessing I thought most likely to persuade you to sobriety, and to keep you from its opposite, such as,

I. The REASONABLENESS of sobriety; nothing so reasonable, as that you should be sober-minded, or truly religious.

II. The virtuous and religious EDUCATION, with which you have been favor'd; and your early acquaintance with the scriptures, lays you under special obligations to be sober-minded. As doth

III. The goodness of God to you in your daily preservation, and in the course of his COMMON PROVIDENCE.

IV. Afflictive visitations in providence, by which God often warns, reproveth and corrects the sons of men, have a LOUD VOICE, and are designed by heaven to AWAKEN you to serious reflexion, and to BEGET in you christian sobriety.

I mentioned also,

V. Your own vows, PROMISES and RESOLUTIONS in certain seasons of danger and distress, from which very few if any of the human race are exempt; these constrain you to be sober-minded; and henceforth to live soberly, righteously and godly in the world.

I now proceed to a

VI. consideration or argument; the
 PEACE OF YOUR MINDS, which is far
 more desirable than any earthly enjoyments,
 and essentially depends upon the sobriety
 of them; or, in other words, it depends
 upon your being truly wise and virtuous,
 and living such an holy, reasonable life as
 I am recommending to you. There is no
 other life agreeable to the superior, and
 most excellent part of human nature; none
 that yields such solid satisfaction to the
 MIND, the principal, the only seat of RA-
 TIONAL HAPPINESS. Any other kind of
 life, i. e. any sinful, profligate one, must
 be unhappy, because irrational; because it
 is contrary to the light and dictates of the
 mind, or to natural conscience. Pride,
 envy, malice, covetousness, and all other
 vicious passions, are in their own nature
 destructive of human felicity: they at once
 pollute, poison and torment the soul. And
 besides: no man, unless you suppose him
 a right down atheist, such an one as is

hardly to be found in the world; or a person quite stupified and abandoned, can lead an impious, vicious life, without being self-condemned;—without having his own reason and conscience against him, and being, sometimes at least, under apprehensions of the just and awful displeasure of the Almighty. All men in general, especially those that have been educated in the belief of the christian revelation, have their serious hours;—their times of reflexion, in which they cannot, if they would, avoid thinking of God and their own ways; of their duty, and what the habitual violation of it must terminate in at last. No man can live always in a frolic, or in such an uninterrupted course, either of worldly business, or of pleasures and amusements, that grave and serious thoughts will not at times force themselves upon him. And whenever they do so, then the wicked man knows, and feels himself to be, what he actually is, a wretch; a self-accused, self-condemned criminal, presaging in his conscience, a light which will lighten every

"man that cometh into the world." his future condemnation at an higher tribunal. But that even in the midst of jollity, laughter and grinnings indulgence, the heart of such men is often sorrowful, whether you see a sudden gloom appearing upon their faces, or not. How wretched are they then, at other times!

Consider then, the unhappy state of such a man; of one, whose only refuge from conscious shame and dishonor, from guilty fears and anxiety, is in business, diversions or sleep;—in flying from thought, in flying as it were from himself! Which yet he cannot always do so effectually, but that trouble will pursue him from business to the banquet, to places of riot and guilty pleasure: nor will it leave even his sleep unmolested. For when he saith, "My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint;" then he is "scared with dreams, and terrified with visions*."

* Job chap. vii.

But consider, more especially, the miserable condition of such a man in times of adversity and danger; such as were spoken of under the preceding head: when he is forced more directly upon serious reflexions on life and death, on another world, and a judgment to come. Where is then his refuge, his support, his confidence and "strong tower?" At these times he can no longer cheat and delude himself by business or diversions, into an imaginary happiness: the fool's paradise then vanisheth quite away. Shall he therefore, when he is no longer permitted to enjoy this, console himself with the thoughts of God and his providence; and, "in the multitude of his thoughts within him," have his "soul delighted with these divine comforts?" Alas! these reflexions are commonly the most dispiriting, the most gloomy and tormenting of any, to a wicked man in adversity: they are themselves the principal source of his distress. So that putting wicked men upon such a method to get comfort, is much like comforting a self.

condemned malefactor in prison, by re-
minding him of his approaching trial, and
the equity of his judge! When Paul
preached of righteousness, temperance and
judgment to come, the guilty Felix, even
in the height of his prosperity and glory,
trembled on his tribunal before his poor
prisoner. This shews the great power of
natural conscience; and, how truly wretched
and miserable those persons are, who live
in the practice of known sin and vice, what-
ever pains they may take, and how artful
soever they may be to disguise it. So that
these observations of the prophet, are
founded in nature and experience, and are
maxims of eternal truth—"The wicked
are like the troubled sea, when it cannot
rest, whole waters cast up mire and dirt."
"There is no peace, saith my God, to the
wicked." Consider now, on the other hand, the
inward peace and happiness, which natu-
rally attend sobriety, or the belief and
practice of true religion, according to the

"glorious gospel of the blessed God." A sincere christian's reason and conscience are his friends and advocates; approving and justifying his general course of life to himself. He has the testimony of a good conscience; and the consequence hereof is, that he considers God himself as his friend. For "if our own heart condemn us not," says the apostle John, "then have we confidence towards God." And the apostle Paul, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." The sincere believer, or real christian, has "strong consolation," even "all joy and peace in believing." His hopes, like the wise man's house, are founded upon a rock, the "rock of ages," and will not be BEATEN DOWN by all the rains and floods, the winds and storms of adversity; though they may sometimes be shaken.

Such hope in God, as is the natural consequence of a sober mind resting itself on the divine promises; or, of pure and undefiled religion: such hope in God, I say, at once heightens all the joyful scenes and occurents of human life, and brightens every gloomy one. Great peace have they that love,—that sincerely love the law of God, and nothing shall offend them: “The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.” Be assured that our blessed Saviour did not delude or amuse his disciples with a fallacious promise, and the expectation of an imaginary, fanciful or unsolid happiness; when he said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” And again: “If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth—I will not leave you

"comfortless." These promises like him
 that made them, are faithful and true:
 and whoever will make the experiment, by
 an hearty, unreserved dedication of himself
 to the service of God in Christ, shall find
 them so; although it once appeared a mys-
 tery even to one of the apostles, "how
 our Lord would manifest himself to
 them, and not unto the world*." Tho'
 a steadfast adherence to the doctrines and
 precepts of Christ, in opposition either to
 Paganism, Judaism, or the Antichristian
 corrupters of the gospel, may sometimes be
 the occasion of outward trials and afflic-
 tions; yet those who have had the honesty
 and fortitude of mind to stand these trials,
 have, in no time or age, found themselves
 forsaken of God; but could say experi-
 mentally with the great apostle—"Blessed
 be God, even the Father of our Lord
 Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and
 the God of all comfort; who comforteth
 us in all our tribulation.—For as the sub-

* John xiv. 22

"sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our
"consolation aboundeth by Christ".

whoever will make the experiment by

Let me therefore exhort you to be so-
BER-MINDED, by these very weighty con-

siderations: that this is the way to enjoy
true peace of mind, and a substantial hap-

piness in this world, whatever crosses, dis-
appointments and outward afflictions you

may meet with: and, on the other hand,
that if you continue in the practice of folly

and wickedness, you will be full of disqui-
tude within, and truly wretched whenever

you dare to reflect on your state, whatever
outward prosperity may attend you. I will

accordingly close this head of argument,
by reminding you of the words of the royal

psalmist—"There be many that say, who
"will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou

"up the light of thy countenance upon
"us. Thou hast put gladness into my

"heart, more than in the time that their
"corn and their wine increased. I will

"both lay me down in peace, and sleep:
 "for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in
 "safety*."

VII. As by being sober-minded, or truly religious, you will best secure inward peace and comfort; so you will also best consult your CREDIT and REPUTATION IN THE WORLD; at least in the opinion of those, whose judgment is most worthy of regard: I mean, all truly wise and good men; all who are of a sound mind themselves. "The righteous is more excellent," and therefore more honorable also, "than his [unrighteous] neighbour:" he is so in reason and nature; he is so likewise in the estimation of all reasonable and good men. For it is one characteristic of a citizen of Zion, that "in his eyes a vile, or wicked, person is contemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord."

This is not, indeed, an argument of so great weight, as those which have been

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mentioned before, and as others which are to be mentioned hereafter: and people, as is well known, may be far too desirous of "that honor that cometh from men." But yet this is in itself a rational motive, and often used as such in the holy scriptures. You ought, doubtless, to have some concern for your reputation amongst men, tho' always in subordination to the "honor that cometh from God." For "a good name is better than precious ointment." This is of real importance to all men in general, and particularly to young men just setting out in the world. Their present interest depends very much, and sometimes chiefly, upon their character. A young man who has no sense of shame, or no regard for his own honor and reputation, is in a fair way, not only for universal contempt, but ruin. And, as was said before, sobriety of mind and manners is, according to the established course of things, the most effectual means of securing a good name amongst men.

"But you will say, perhaps, "However
 "excellent a thing religion may be in it-
 "self, however worthy of honor, and
 "how much soever some persons may ex-
 "tol it; yet the greater part of mankind,
 "and those with whom One must be
 "chiefly concerned, are foolish and vi-
 "cious. They do not esteem a person the
 "more, some of them the less, on account
 "of his sobriety. Many will rather ridi-
 "cule and scoff at him, than honor, speak
 "well of or befriend him, for his religion
 "and virtue. To strengthen your objec-
 "tion against my present argument, you may
 "possibly add, "That even some kings, go-
 "vernors and governments, after issuing
 "proclamations for the encouragement of
 "piety and virtue, with assurances of shew-
 "ing the most countenance, and giving
 "the preference to those persons, who
 "should be found to practice them, and
 "of discourteaching those of a contrary
 "character, have, in many instances, no-
 "toriously disappointed the public expecta-

"tion by a contrary conduct; by courting,
"careless and preferring the most vicious,
"worthless and sordid, and frowning upon
"or at best, neglecting men of known
"virtue and sobriety."

"and those with whom One must be

This is a pretty heavy charge upon the

world; but as it naturally occurs by way

of objection to what was before asserted,

I shall consider, and endeavour to invalidate

it, as far as is consistent with truth and

justice, or, without "speaking wickedly,

"for God." The following observations,

I imagine, will shew that this objection has

much less weight in it than you may think;

and leaves my argument all the force that

it was supposed to have.

1. It must be allowed that piety and

virtue are far from being honored so much

in the world, as they ought in reason to

be. But put the matter upon the worst

supposition that can be made:—suppose

that those who honor religion in their

hearts, or think the better of the virtuous

and labor for being so, are very few in com-
 parison of those who infinitely despise both;
 yet, upon this most unfavorable suppo-
 sition, let me ask, Which is the most to be
 desired, the approbation and esteem of the
 NEW WISE and KNOWING, whose judge of
 things according to nature, truth and pro-
 priety; or that of a vast multitude of
 FOOLS and MADMEN, who are really igno-
 rant what true worth, excellency and honor
 consist in? If you were painters, statuaries
 or architects; if you were poets, musicians
 or orators; and reputation, not riches, was
 your principal end, would you not be am-
 bitious of pleasing the best judges, the
 greatest masters in these noble arts, rather
 than vast ignorant multitudes, who had
 neither skill, taste nor judgment in them?
 And so in all other arts and professions, if
 you had a view to reputation only, not
 gain? Doubtless you would. The appli-
 cation of this to the point in hand, is easy.
 If there were but three, two, nay, but one
 wise and good man in the world; but ONE
 who distinguished rightly betwixt persons
 or characters, and honored virtue and so-

briefly, you ought in reason to covet the
 approbation and esteem of that one man,
 more than that of the whole ignorant and
 wicked world besides: especially when you
 reflect, that his judgment is ratified in
 heaven, by Him that has said, "Them
 that honor me, I will honor; and they
 that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

But, 2. The supposition here made, is very
 injurious to the world. For there are great
 numbers of people in all christian and
 protestant countries, and particularly
 in our own, who are sincere lovers of
 virtue and religion, and who accordingly
 esteem those that practice them, far more
 than they do the vicious, profane and disor-
 dinate. The proportion which the good bear
 to others, in point of number, cannot be
 determined: but, that it is very consider-
 able, cannot be denied without great un-
 charitableness. And if you are sober-
 minded, you may depend upon the esteem
 of these in general, so far as you and your

characters are known to them. All the truly virtuous and good, esteem and honor persons of the same character, as such. And whenever it seems to be otherwise, it is because they DO NOT KNOW THEM to be such; but are under a mistake as to their character, either because of some particular opinions which they may hold, that are supposed to be inconsistent with piety, or on some other account. But these cases being excepted, which are very rare amongst the truly wise and sober; all good men in general actually love and honor one another. If they ever dislike each other, it is not, considered under their real characters as virtuous and pious, but their MISTAKEN characters as vicious or impious, that they do so.

3. There are many more people who honor virtue in others, than practise it themselves. By what I have read and observed, there is a very general regard paid to religion and virtue, even by vicious men. There is a witness for God and

religion in the breasts of very wicked persons; which causes them, in some measure, to esteem and reverence that virtue in others, which they have not the resolution and integrity to practise. Besides: their own interest, which, you may be sure they love and regard, naturally leads them, some particular cases being excepted, to form connexions, at least in affairs of commerce and business, with the sober, honest and virtuous, who, they know, will not wrong and deceive them; rather than with persons of openly profligate, or suspected morals. Even knaves cannot ordinarily trust knaves with their interest; but they can and do, much oftener and more freely, trust men of approved virtue and integrity with it. When good men are despised or disliked by the bad, it is generally, if not always owing to one or other of the causes following. Some good men are, perhaps, of unpopular sentiments in religion; and hypocritical zealots for the established orthodoxy in any country, may dislike them MERELY on that account. Other good

men may have a tincture of superstition, enthusiasm or sourness; or they may have some personal oddities, singularities, or an uncouth behaviour; some disagreeable appendages of their religion, or some natural imperfections attending them in a degree that is not common. Either of these things may create a dislike, and kind of aversion to them, even in the minds of those, who at the same time cannot but esteem them, considered as men of sincere piety and virtue, or stripped of those blemishes and imperfections. It must farther be allowed, that bad men, whether in HIGH or LOW stations, may occasionally have an aversion to the wife and honest, considered as standing in opposition to their unrighteous, ambitious, and avaricious designs. In which cases, however, it is more properly said, that they have an inordinate and criminal love to their interest, or to power and worldly honors, than that they have any real dislike to those good men, considered as such: for they rather esteem them in their hearts, even while they would be glad

to have them out of their way. Thus also bad men, whether of high or low degree, may occasionally have some DIRTY JOBS, and WICKED WORK to do, in which none will serve them, except DIRTY, LYING, "leud fellows of the baser sort," whom they care for that very end, while they frown upon, and keep at a distance from, honest men; not because they inwardly esteem the former, or dislike the latter, as such. For those they still despise, while they employ them in SUCH WORK, and these they honor in their hearts, though they will not do, but rather OBSTRUCT IT. As profane and vicious as the world is, there are in fact but very few, if any persons in it, so abandoned as to hate or despise a good and virtuous man, only for being so; nay, as not to have an inward esteem for him, and a secret contempt for those that are of profligate principles and morals. So that if you are truly pious and virtuous; especially if your religion is open and manly, truly christian, free from superstition, souness and enthusiasm, and from

any great singularities and oddities, you may depend, not only upon the respect and esteem of all the wise and virtuous in general, but also upon that of the foolish and vicious, with a very few exceptions. Whereas, on the other hand, if you are vicious and profligate, you may be assured that you will be secretly despised, not only by the good, but even by the generality of the wicked themselves.

4. As to what was said in the objection, about men of bad morals being countenanced in some countries, while the virtuous and good have been neglected, after public EDICTS or PROCLAMATIONS which gave reason to expect the contrary; this is easily to be accounted for upon the principles laid down above—Either the true characters of these persons respectively, were not known; or else the promoters of the former, and neglecters of the latter, had some particular sinister and dishonorable ENDS to answer by such a conduct; which has doubtless sometimes been the case—

But, by the way, there cannot be a clearer testimony given to the esteem and honor that are actually due to religion, in the opinion of the world, or of that disapprobation and contempt which are due to vice, than such public acts, edicts or proclamations for the encouragement of the former, and for discountenancing the latter; how often soever the world has been deceived in past ages, by the honorable, excellent and royal AUTHORS of them—Though in all governments, other circumstances being alike, those persons who are SUPPOSED to be the WISEST and BEST, have in general actually had the preference given them, in all ages.

5. Another undeniable proof of the general esteem there is in the world for virtue and religion, is HYPOCRISY. How many persons, though wholly destitute of the reality, “the power,” yet put on the “form of godliness,” merely for the sake of their credit and reputation in the world? If an homely bird decks herself out in the

rich plumage of the peacock, it is doubtless in order to make a better appearance in the eyes of spectators, than she could in her own—Wicked men know, that if they appear in their own proper colours, they must be contemned, if not shunned and detested by most people; even by those that are in the same “cage of unclean and hateful “birds” with them. They therefore dissemble, turn impostors, and adorn themselves, if I may so express it, with the feathers, and more respectable plumage of religious, honest men; that they may enjoy at once the reputation of religion, and the imaginary gains and advantages of unrighteousness. There would be no occasion for hypocrisy, and therefore no hypocrites, if wicked and profligate men were generally as much esteemed and honored as the good; any more than there would be counterfeit coin, if there were none genuine, that was commonly valued, and

that passed current in the world. So that
hypocrisy itself, that odious sin, is in some
sort a standing witness for God and reli-
gion, in all ages and countries; as well as
a proof of the general esteem there is for
virtue, how little soever there may be of
the practice. It is a tacit confession of the
superior excellency and honor of true reli-
gion; and that vice cannot well keep itself
in countenance, even in this wicked world,
without putting on some appearance of
virtue. And if vice avails herself thus of
the credit of religion; yet she does homage
to her for it, though unwillingly. For hy-
pocrisy is a kind of tribute which the for-
mer, with an aukward and shameful re-
luctance, pays to the latter, her acknow-
ledged superior, from one generation to
another, in all ages and all nations.

6. Why do you, my young brethren—?

—No, I will not say, You—But, why do
the vicious and profligate chuse secrecy and
darkness, as the fittest occasions for perpe-
trating their crimes? Why are they that

are drunken, usually "drunken in the night," rather than in the day? Why does "the eye of the adulterer wait for the twilight?" Why does that of the thief and assassin commonly do the same? In a word, why do vicious men in general chuse to sin in secret, rather than openly; and, as far as may be, to conceal their vices from the world, unless it is, because they know the world in general dislikes vice, and esteems virtue; if not practically, yet in opinion?

7. Did you ever know any person that was addicted to slander and defamation, pretend to reproach another, by ACCUSING him of loving or fearing God;—of honoring Jesus Christ, and keeping his commandments;—of observing his own promises, and speaking nothing but truth;—of loving his neighbour as himself, and of being honest, sober and virtuous in his whole conversation?—They that deal in defamation, understand their wicked art, and the sentiments of the world, much

better than to say these things of any One by way of reproach; which they know would be the highest praise and commendation.

8. To put this matter at once in the fairest and strongest light; let me ask you the following question—Suppose you had some mortal enemy, whom you would be glad to ruin; and particularly, whom you desired to see despised and detested by mankind in general; which do you think would contribute the most effectually to this end,—to represent him as a wicked and impious, a vicious, faithless, debauched and profligate person;—One that neither feared God, nor regarded man: or, as One that was truly pious and sober, upright and virtuous;—in a word, a sincere christian both in principle and practice? If you were determined to hurt your enemy's reputation as much as you could; if you were under no checks or restraints of conscience, and if you were sure to be believed by the world, in whatever you

said of him, which of these two very op-
 posite characters would you give the hated
 person?—You can be at no loss for an an-
 swer to so plain a question: and that very
 answer, which you have now in your
 minds, shews that you are sensible, the
 world in general esteems virtuous and reli-
 gious men, and contemns and abhors those
 that are profligately wicked. You know
 that even the bad in general, much prefer,
 in their judgment and esteem, the former
 to the latter: Though even the good are
 often under a kind of necessity of KEEPING
 themselves having close CONNEXIONS with, and
 consulting the vicious:—sometimes, per-
 haps, for valuable public ends; but prob-
 ably oftener, for private advantage, or
 for fear of MISCHIEF from such persons;
 as our American Indians are said formerly
 to have worshiped the DEVIL. An un-
 happy situation! How are they to be pi-
 tied, who have some real love to virtue;
 and yet are obliged, as it were, to care-
 less the profligates, on account of their riches,
 power, and that influence which they often

have in the affairs of this foolish, corrupt and wicked world?—

I cannot but make this one short reflection on the foregoing observations, viz. That from them it plainly appears, that vicious men, more especially under the light of the gospel, are all in general SELF-CONDEMNED; inasmuch as they cannot but acknowledge and approve the right, in their own judgment and consciences, as honorable and praise-worthy; and yet habitually do the wrong, from an evil propensity in their natures. To allude to the words of the apostle, they consent to the law of God, that it is holy, just, good and spiritual; but still themselves are "carnal, sold under sin," as bond-servants and SLAVES to it; whose tyrannical dictates they obey, contrary to the light and law of the mind. For that which they do, they allow not; neither do they do that good, to which they have some faint desire; but what they do in a sort hate, that they practise—O wretched, that they

are! Who, or what shall deliver them from the body of this death, but the "law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus?"

Let me exhort you, my young brethren, duly to consider those motives to true religion, which have been mentioned in this and the former discourse. Whatever your corrupt passions may have to object, I know that I have a powerful party on my side in your breasts and bosoms; I mean your own conscience, your own reason. To that, and to God, the source of all reason, light, truth and justice, I have surely a right to make an appeal from the partial, bribed, blind judgment of passion, and carnal affections. I accordingly lodge my appeal there, with them: and you must, whether you will or no, answer, and give an account of yourselves, at both those tribunals;—unless you should give up the cause by consenting, as you are exhorted, "to be SOBER-MINDED."

Let me just add, with reference to the last-mentioned argument, as to your reputation in the world; that this will very much depend upon your behaviour in youth. The character is most commonly formed and established in that season of life, either as good or bad: and which ever of them it is, it will be of no small consequence to you in this world, while you are inhabitants of it. A bad name is often of fatal consequence to a young man just setting out in the world, as to his interest therein. On the other hand, "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving-favor, than silver and gold." A good character preserves old, and creates new friends; it is at once agreeable and advantageous in many respects. Allow me then, as One sincerely concerned for your temporal, as well as eternal good, to exhort you seasonably to take care of your reputation and honor, by a discrete, sober and virtuous behaviour. And if any of you have unhappily, by former miscarriages, brought disgrace upon

yourself, lose no time, but immediately endeavour to retrieve your characters, by making it manifest that you have seen your errors, and are reformed.

The world is candid enough to make some considerable allowances for the errors of young men, if they are not obstinate in, but speedily reform them. In this case, their unexperienced, tender age is a powerful advocate for them: it pleads so eloquently in their behalf, that it never fails to excite compassion, and to obtain a pardon for them from the world. And, what is of infinitely more importance to you, if you sincerely repent of, and forsake your evil ways, God will not remember them against you: he will not be always wroth, neither will he keep his anger forever. “If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed—and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they SHALL NOT BE MENTIONED UNTO

“**HTM.** With God you have a far more powerful advocate than your youth;—one whom the Father heareth always, even “Jesus Christ the righteous.” But still you ought to plead, still to implore mercy for yourselves. And I shall conclude with reminding you of part of a prayer of the royal psalmist, which you might do well to consider and imitate.—Remember, O “Lord, thy tender mercies; and thy loving-kindness; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness sake, O Lord. For thy name sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.”

● Psalm cxxv.

“neither will he forsake thee forever. “the wicked will turn from all his sins “that he hath committed—and do that “which is lawful and right, he shall surely “live; he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they “shall not be mentioned unto

S E R M O N XII.

ON THE

TEMPORAL ADVANTAGES,

CONNECTED WITH

S O B R I E T Y.

Vol. II,

M

Young Men! I have exhorted you to be sober.

ON THE

MY young brethren, in the two preceding discourses you were exhorted to be sober-minded, by divers considerations and motives, which need not now be mentioned. I shall therefore without any repetition, proceed in this exhortation, by laying before you some other arguments; all, or real, though not of equal weight: hoping that, for your own sakes, you will give such an attention to them, as they may reasonably demand. Wherefore,

VIII. To be sober-minded will be most for your advantage in this world; most for the health of your bodies, and for

M 2

S E R M O N XII.

T I T U S ii. 6.

YOUNG MEN *likewise exhort to be sober-minded.*

MY young brethren, in the two preceding discourses you were exhorted to be sober-minded, by divers considerations and motives, which need not now be mentioned. I shall therefore, without any repetition, proceed in this exhortation, by laying before you some other arguments; all, of real, though not of equal weight: hoping that, for your own sakes, you will give such an attention to them, as they may reasonably demand. Wherefore,

VIII. To be sober-minded will be most for your ADVANTAGE in THIS WORLD; most for the health of your bodies, and for

your outward prosperity in all other respects. How this tends to the peace and comfort of your minds, and also to your reputation in the world, was shewn in the foregoing discourse. And it may answer a valuable end, if I can now make it appear to you, that your temporal felicity in other respects, very much depends upon your being truly religious. Though this is not an argument of the greatest weight; yet it is of considerable importance, as it may remove some prejudices against religion, arising from a false supposition, that it is prejudicial to your worldly felicity. And I shall insist the longer upon this argument, because, as I apprehend, it is not so frequently and particularly discussed in the pulpit, as might be for the credit, and thereby for the interest of religion.

But you will observe, that when I speak of it as being for your interest to be sober-minded, in conformity to the principles and precepts of christianity, I speak with particular reference to the age and country

in which you live; wherein this religion is publicly countenanced, and generally professed. For, no regard being had to these circumstances, it is supposeable that the belief, profession and practice of the christian religion, might be very detrimental to a person's credit and worldly interest, in that sense of them which is here intended. If you lived in an age and country, wherein the name of Christ was generally odious, his religion not publicly tolerated, and his disciples, as such, reproached, persecuted, subjected to the confiscation of goods, to bonds and imprisonment; or even, wherein they were not allowed the privileges and liberties common to other subjects; upon this supposition, I say, your godly and christian sobriety would manifestly tend to hurt your reputation and interest, instead of promoting them. This was the condition, this the situation, these the circumstances of christians, for about three hundred years after Christ; till the days of Constantine the Great. The public voice condemned them as an odious, impious

sect; the laws were against them; their enemies were inveterate, and had all the power in their hands. The consequence was, that they were denied the common privileges of men; and “whosoever would live godly in Christ Jesus, suffered persecution” in one or other, and sometimes many of its hateful forms. Christians, in those sad times, besides being reproached for the name of Christ, were often called to suffer the loss of all things; they were haled before kings, governors and other magistrates; they were imprisoned, thrown into dungeons, stoned, impaled, crucified, slain with the sword, sawn in sunder; and forced to suffer unnumber’d indignities and tortures, merely as christians; not accepting deliverance, on the condition of renouncing the faith, and blaspheming the name of Christ “that they might obtain a better resurrection.” And though the persecution did not rage against them in the same degree of fury, during the long period before mentioned; yet in any part thereof, it was apparently contrary to a

man's worldly reputation and interest, to be a christian, as it may be even at this day, in countries where the laws and people in general, are against the religion and disciples of Christ; and as it may be for protestants in roman-catholic countries, or any others called christian, where there is not a general toleration.

But with respect to ourselves, and to this happy country of liberty, the case is quite otherwise. Christianity is commonly professed; the laws countenance and support it; the government is in the hands of professed christians, and christians enjoy some privileges which others do not. There is here a general liberty and toleration for all to worship God according to their consciences (not a little grievous to some particular persons of dark, contracted and groveling minds.) And it is in general a very reputable thing amongst us, to be a pious, virtuous and good man. Now, under these circumstances, you may easily per-

ceive, it is most for your worldly interest to be sober-minded; far more so, in all respects, than it would be to be profligate and impious. Let me more particularly observe a few things here, in order to set the present argument in a proper light.

And,

I. As, in these circumstances, virtue and religion will be a recommendation of you to the esteem of people, it manifestly tends to your interest in this respect; I mean, to what is commonly called worldly gain, or profit. For people in general, good and bad, some few cases being excepted, would much rather trust, and have connexions in business with a sober, honest man, of an established good character, than with a vicious and profligate one, of a contrary character. And this evidently tends to a person's interest, whatever be his station or calling in life; especially when it is considered, that the wiser and better part, and those who ordinarily have it most in their power to serve and befriend you, will be

more particularly disposed to do so, from real regard; while others, for their own interest, will rather employ, or have concerns with an honest man, *CÆTERIS PARIBUS*; than with one of no religion, or of bad morals.

2. As to public posts of honor or emolument, for which some of you, perhaps, either do, or may in time stand as candidates; it is to be hoped that, all other circumstances being alike, your known integrity, and good behaviour in life, would be some recommendation of you, and procure a preference. Certainly it would, under any tolerably wise and good administration of government; especially in those governments which have a great mixture of the popular form, and in countries where there are no iniquitous TESTS. Let me add, that if we have formerly, in certain instances, known persons of infamous characters preferred to magistracies, or to other honorable and lucrative offices, to the neglect of virtue and merit; yet I

should be extremely loth to suppose that this is either now a common thing amongst us, or will be so hereafter.

If we suppose the providence of God governs the world, in the manner declared in the holy scriptures; those who love and serve him in sincerity, have much more reason to expect his blessing upon their honest designs and undertakings, in order to obtain a competency of the good things of this life, than impious and profligate men have, to hope for his blessing upon theirs; especially upon such designs as are in their nature dishonest and criminal. This is the least that can be said with reference to what may be expected from divine providence, in the ordinary course of it, according to very numerous representations in scripture; which are rather confirmed than contradicted by experience. Though, as we do not certainly know the hearts of men, and may be deceived as to their characters; we must needs be very inadequate judges, when the conduct of providence is,

or is not, strictly agreeable to these representations. And though there may be some exceptions here, as under other general rules; yet it is not improbable, that these may be much fewer in the present case, than is commonly supposed. The examples of wicked men prospered in this world, are indeed very numerous, and indisputable: for God is good to the unthankful and to the evil. But it is not, neither can it be, so certain to us on the other hand, that the good are often forsaken, or left destitute by him. And it is not unworthy of remark, that in that psalm wherein the prosperity of some wicked men, is set forth more amply than in any other part of scripture, the inspired psalmist makes the following declaration, so much to the honor of divine providence: “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the

"righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging
"bread*."

4. It should be observed, that many of those virtues which belong to the head of christian sobriety, have, in their very nature, a direct tendency to promote your temporal interest and happiness. For example; diligence in your worldly callings, temperance in meat and drink, and a virtuous moderation in other respects, have a plain, direct tendency to secure and advance your wealth, your health and ease, and to prolong your lives. In conformity whereto, Solomon says of wisdom, that "length of days is in her right hand, and "in her left, riches and honor."

On the other hand,

5. Most of those vices and excesses, which are repugnant to SOBRIETY, have as direct and apparent a tendency to preju-

* Psalm xxxvii. 23, 24, 25.

dice your worldly interest and happiness.
 For is not this evidently true of idleness,
 intemperance, pride and luxury—of wast-
 ing your time, and squandering away your
 money in riotous living, in leudness and
 debauchery, in the fopperies of dress, in
 frequent and expensive diversions, and the
 like? These are all costly and impoverish-
 ing vices: and some of them are as preju-
 dicial to the health of your bodies, as they
 are to your purses and your souls. How
 many sad examples have there been of
 people, particularly of YOUNG MEN, that
 have, by these and such-like follies and ex-
 cesses, absolutely destroyed themselves as
 to this world? — their reputation, their
 estates, their health, their lives! — “Be
 “not over-much wicked,” says the wise
 man; “neither be thou foolish: Why
 “shouldest thou die before thy time?”
 But when or where did you ever know
 a young man ruin or destroy himself by
 his wisdom or sobriety, his virtue and re-
 figion!

6. If it should be said, that a man has sometimes an opportunity to increase his riches by dishonest means;—for example, by lying, perjury, extortion, taking bribes, theft, fraud, or lawless violence and robbery: and that, if he foregoes these tempting and PRECIOUS OPPORTUNITIES for the sake of religion and a good conscience, his virtue is then prejudicial to his interest: I will not “speak wickedly for God,” by absolutely denying that any man ever did, or can, increase his wealth by such unjust means: even our own age and country might furnish some examples of this kind. But let me make a few queries here. Do you not think, there are many MORE people, who hurt their worldly interest in the end by dishonesty; by losing their credit, character and business, than there are who prejudice it by a strict adherence to truth and justice, and a steady perseverance in honest courses? I think this will admit of no doubt: so that the advantage, upon the whole, is still on the side of virtue and

fobriety. But, admitting that they were absolutely sure, as you cannot be, of bettering your worldly circumstances in the end, by any iniquitous means; let me next ask, How much you think it is HONESTLY worth to be a knave; a liar, cheat, or perjured villain? I conclude, you would not forfeit your honor and conscience for a very trifling sum, as many have done. For how much then, do you think it would really be worth while to do it? Even Balaam, who secretly loved the wages of unrighteousness, could not but say in his calm reflexions, when Balak the king of Moab offered him a large sum to do a wicked thing—"If Balak would give me his house-full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do good or bad *."—Now, was this a reasonable reflexion, or was it not? You cannot deny it to be so. And can you hope, by any unrighteous means, to get more than a royal palace full of sil-

* Numb. xxiv. 13.

ver and gold? And if you could, yet would not these ungodly gains be over-balanced by the uneasy reflexions in your own minds! Would not your real happiness in this world be rather obstructed than promoted, by these unrighteous, though gainful practices? But such great gains of iniquity and fraud, as these, are wholly imaginary, unless perhaps, you were kings or princes, or their chief MINISTERS and FAVORITES.—If you are dishonest, or ever so wicked and avaritious; yet you must play at far SMALLER GAMES than these. Nay, according to the ordinary, established course of things, interest is actually on the side of virtue and honesty. Though religion, honor and conscience were wholly out of the question; yet any COMMON MAN would run a most imprudent risque in becoming a knave and villain, with a view to worldly gain. Almost all persons, except a FEW GREAT MEN and their TOOLS, hurt their interest at last, instead of serving it, by injustice and oppression, fraud and violence. How often do men utterly ruin their credit,

and with it, their temporal interest, by being greedy of gain, and using lawless means to obtain it? Yea, how often do they hereby procure infamous punishment, with the loss of all, from the hands of civil justice? and even capital punishment? It is therefore evident, upon the whole, according to the good old proverb, that HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY; tho' we confine our views entirely to worldly gain and profit. "An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning," says the wise man, "but the end thereof shall not be blessed."— And again: "Envy not the oppressor, and chuse none of his ways—The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesteth the habitation of the just." And God declareth by the prophet Jeremiah, That "as the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days; and at his end shall be a fool."

7. But you will say, perhaps, that giving alms to the poor is one of the duties of religion; and that this is directly contrary to a person's worldly interest, and tends to poverty. Let me briefly hint a few things, relative to this objection. And, first; in giving alms every man is bound in reason to have some consideration of his own ability, circumstances, real occasions, and the obligations of justice to his family, and to others. No person, except in some very uncommon cases, is obliged to give more than he can afford without much difficulty, or straitning himself; never, more than is consistent with the obligations which he is under to others in point of justice. In the next place, if you are industrious, and avoid all foolish, extravagant and sinful expences, as religion obliges you to be and do, you may the better afford to give something to the necessitous sick and poor. A quarter part of what many consume in their expensive follies and vices, both to the hurt of themselves and others, might

make them tolerable good christians in point of alms-giving, if employed in that way, from a good principle. Though you should discharge this christian duty, as far as could in reason be expected of you, yet it would probably be much less expensive to you than those vices, follies and excesses, which are common amongst young men: and you would, at the same time, have a rational and solid satisfaction therein: whereas shame and remorse are the natural fruits of intemperance and luxury, riot and debauchery. Again: though you were wholly destitute of christian sobriety; yet if you had but common humanity, you would not refuse an alms, once in a while, to a miserable fellow-creature, ready to perish with cold or hunger, when it was in your power to relieve him. So that your being truly religious, and giving alms from a christian principle, might not, perhaps, be the occasion of any great addition to your expences of this sort: I mean, unless you

were otherwise to be hardened to a great degree indeed; so as to be destitute of the common feelings of pity and compassion, as well as of the love of God. You must get rid of all sympathy and humanity, and be worse than barbarians; I mean, become MISERS, if you would save all expences of this kind; for, merely being destitute of christianity, will not answer the end. Moreover; you may reasonably expect the blessing of God abundantly to make up to you whatever you bestow in discrete and well-timed charity to the poor, according to his commandments. There are many passages of scripture, directly to this purpose. I have time to remind you of two or three only, from the writings of Solomon—Honor the Lord with thy substance;—so “shall thy barns be filled
“with plenty”—“He that giveth to the
“poor, lendeth to the Lord; and that
“which he giveth, he will surely repay
“him.” And very observable is the following passage: “There is that scattereth,

“and yet increaseth: and there is that
 “withholdeth more than is meet; but it
 “tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul
 “shall be made fat; and he that wa-
 “tereth, shall also be watered himself*.”

You can then have no reasonable objec-
 tion against religion, on account of its
 tendency to impoverish you in the way of
 alms-giving; but this objection stands in
 great force against irreligion, oppression,
 uncharitableness, sloth, luxury, riot, and
 every kind of vicious excess.

Upon laying together what has been
 said under this, and some preceding heads
 of argument, there is one general, and
 very important reflection in favour of re-
 ligion, which naturally arises. — It is this,
 that as a sober, religious life is the only
 reasonable one; so it is by far the hap-
 piest, and, in all respects, the most for
 your advantage in this world. If you

* Prov. xi. 24, 25

place happiness in having peace of mind; that has been shewn to be the genuine fruit of religion; as disquietude within, is the invariable consequence of irreligion, vice and folly. If you place it in reputation, or the good opinion of others; that is the natural attendant of virtue and sobriety; as contempt and disgrace are of the contrary. If you place it in bodily health and long life; these are most effectually promoted by sobriety; as sickness, pains and a premature death, are the frequent effects of intemperance, and profligate morals. If you place it in worldly riches; religion and virtue are very friendly to it in this view: whereas there are many vices which tend directly to poverty; much more so, than any one virtue that can be named. These things are not only certain, but obvious; they lie level to all capacities. And is it not a great recommendation of religion to your judgment, your reason, that it is the most sure and effectual means imaginable, some

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extraordinary cases being excepted, to promote your temporal felicity in all these respects? — your peace of mind, your reputation and honor, your health with length of days, and your INTEREST, in the most usual sense of this word? This is strict truth, according to the established course of things, at least in all countries where the true religion is publicly countenanced, and generally professed. So that though “gain is not godliness,” as some may imagine; yet we have the best authority to say, that “godliness is profitable unto ALL things; having promise of the LIFE THAT NOW IS, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying*.”

What then are all those imaginations which young people commonly entertain about religion, as if it were unfriendly to their temporal interest and felicity? What

* Tim. iv. 8, 9.

are all such imaginations, I say, but idle fancies and chimeras, which mere fiction, or the father of lies has invented, to impose upon your credulity, and deceive you to your destruction? As if the ways of wisdom, of virtue and of God, were gloomy, joyless, hard and disagreeable; and those of folly, vice and Satan, easy, profitable, delightful, and truly happy! What a reproach is it to human nature, that such bugbears as these;—conceits, so contrary to all probability and sense, to the word of God, and to the experience of all wise and good men, should ever gain the least credit, so as to frighten either the old or young from being sober-minded; and to make them believe that true happiness is the fruit of error, folly and vice!

It is probable that some well-meaning men have contributed largely to the carrying on so strange and pernicious a delusion, not only by their own gloomy, and

over-austere behaviour; but by abridging the innocent pleasures and liberties of youth, in divers respects; particularly by representing all recreations and pastimes as inconsistent with pure and undefiled religion, instead of being content with guarding against the abuses of them. There is ground to think that these irrational and unscriptural severities, have been a fatal stumbling-block to many young people; and made them dread the very thoughts of religion, as if it were an irreconcilable foe to all temporal happiness. But as it is incumbent upon the teachers of religion, utterly to discountenance every thing that is unreasonable, and contrary to the laws of God; they ought doubtless, on the other hand, to allow and permit to all, particularly to the young, all those innocent liberties and amusements, which the word of God allows or permits. He that adds to the commandments, by forbidding what God has not forbidden, is as presumptuous and

criminal, as he that diminishes from them, by nullifying some of his precepts. In many cases the former is of as bad consequence as the latter, to the interest of virtue and religion in the world. It is so particularly in this case, when the young are deterred from being sober-minded, by being unwarrantably abridged of those recreations and amusements, which God has not prohibited, and which human nature, in its present state, seems to require. Nor are the "teaching for doctrine the commandments of men," and laying "heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, on men's shoulders," the slightest accusations which our Lord brought against those GRAVE, AUSTERE, PROUD, SOLEMN-FAC'D hypocrites, the ancient scribes and pharisees *. There is, in short, no one pleasure or satisfaction in life, that is proper to the nature of man,

* Of the lawfulness and the abuses of recreations, see Serm. VII.

but what may be enjoyed in far greater perfection, within the limits and laws of a truly christian sobriety, than it can possibly be enjoyed in the violation of them, or in the ways of folly, vice and criminal excess. To conclude; the ways of wisdom are, in the highest sense, ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. This you will experimentally know, whenever you, in earnest, make the experiment,

human nature, in its present state, to require. Nor are the "teaching for" "doctrine the commandments of men," and laying "heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, on men's shoulders," the "lightest accusations which our Lord brought against those CRAVE, AUSTERE, PROUD, SOLEMN-FACED hypocrites, the ancient scribes and pharisees." There is, in short, no one pleasure or satisfaction in life, that is proper to the nature of man,

* Of the lawfulness and the abuses of recreations, see Sermon VII.

but what may be enjoyed in the greater
 perfection, within the limits and laws of
 a truly christian society, than it can be
 enjoyed in the violation of them.

S E R M O N XIII

and in the highest sense, was of
 Y O U R M E N
 This you will find in the
 every one in the world, make the
 S E R M O N XIII

FROM

THE CONSIDERATIONS OF THEIR USE-
 FULNESS TO THE WORLD HERBY,
 THEIR PLEASING THEIR BEST FRIENDS,
 AND ANSWERING ONE GREAT END OR
 CHRIST'S COMING INTO THE WORLD.

S E R M O N XIII.

Y O U N G M E N

EXHORTED TO

S O B R I E T Y,

F R O M

THE CONSIDERATIONS OF THEIR USE-
FULNESS TO THE WORLD. HEREBY,
THEIR PLEASING THEIR BEST FRIENDS,
AND ANSWERING ONE GREAT END OF
CHRIST'S COMING INTO THE WORLD.

S E R M O N XIII.

S E R M O N XIII.
TITUS II. 5.
YOUNG MEN BEHAVE YOURSELVES TO BE SOBER.

EXHORTED TO

IN the three last sermons, my young brethren, I proposed eight several considerations, of propriety to engage you to sober-mindedness; as they were pretty largely unfolded, and I shall not detain you with any recapitulation. I now proceed to
THEIR PLEASING THEIR BEST FRIENDS.
IX. Your future usefulness, as well as your own honor, interest and happiness in the world, &c. greatly depends upon your sobriety and good conduct. He that lives soberly, righteously and godly in the world, cannot be a milchicovous member of society: nay, he cannot but be serviceable, and a real ornament to it in his station.

S E R M O N XIII.

TITUS ii. 6.

YOUNG MEN *likewise exhort to be sober-minded.*

IN the three last sermons, my young brethren, I proposed EIGHT several considerations, or motives to engage you to sober-mindedness; as they were pretty largely insisted on, I shall not detain you with any recapitulation, but proceed to a

IX. Your future USEFULNESS, as well as your own honor, interest and happiness in the world, Sirs, greatly depends upon your sobriety and good conduct. He that lives soberly, righteously and godly in the world, cannot be a mischievous member of society: nay, he cannot but be serviceable, and a real ornament to it in his station,

whether high or low ; as every member of the natural body, in the regular discharge of its particular office, contributes to the good and perfection of the body. But can the same be said with equal truth and propriety, of irreligious, wicked and profligate men ? It cannot.

It is indeed owned, that bad men sometimes do much good in the world. But this is either, first, only accidentally ; as we say good may be brought out of evil. Or, secondly, the good which they do, is by such of their actions as are in their nature good, lawful and right, externally considered ; not by their wicked and unrighteous deeds. Or, lastly, they may do good to the world by serving as examples and warning to it, of the shame and misery which are the natural consequence of vice and folly : so that, by their means, others are deterred from pursuing those courses which are ruinous and destructive. Thus, in the first place, the pride, luxury and debauchery of the rich, may be the occasion

of dispersing their wealth, and feeding the poor. In the second case, a vicious man who is diligent in his lawful worldly business, who fights bravely for his king and country, or who discharges any civil office tolerably well, may thereby do good. Any of these things may be done by a very wicked man; but yet he that thus serves his country, does it not by his wickedness; but by that part of his conduct which is lawful and right. And in the third case mentioned, the thief, robber, or other malefactor, benefits his country by being hanged; and serving for a terror and warning to evil-doers. In these three senses, very wicked men may be serviceable to the world. But how much mischief is commonly done by them in other respects? What sore scourges? what curses, have many wicked men been to the world, especially in high stations?—to whole provinces, countries and kingdoms?—yea, to several kingdoms at once? And other wicked men commonly do mischief in the world, in some proportion to their station,

and the sphere in which they act. Consider, on the other hand, what great and extensive blessings many good men have been to the world, especially in high stations;—to their country, nation, and divers nations at once; and other good men in a lower degree, according to their situation, power and influence. Which good they do directly, with design; not accidentally, as the wicked may do it in some instances and degrees.

Now, my young brethren, if you have the least ingenuity, or generosity of mind, you would chuse to be blessings, and not curses to the world. You would chuse to fill up your respective stations in life, at once with honor to yourselves, and benefit to society: both which you will do the most effectually by being truly virtuous and sober-minded. Can you, without pain or regret, think of living rather as common nuisances, than to the advantage of those with whom you are connected?—or even, of living and dying useless?—Or, if not

intirely useless; yet would you be willing that what good you do, should be as it were by accident, as the indirect consequence of your behaviour, instead of being done intentionally and uprightly; so that it may be said to be the proper consequence of a virtuous and laudable behaviour? Or would you be willing to benefit society, only by being sad examples and warnings to it, of the disgrace and misery in which vice naturally terminates; and so making other men wise and cautious, virtuous and happy at your expence?—especially at so dear a rate as your own infamy and destruction! If you well digest these thoughts in your minds, they will fill you with an ardent, a truly noble desire to do good in your day; to be serviceable in your respective places, instead of hurtful; and therefore to be wise and virtuous: especially when you consider, that this will be, beyond all comparison, the most honorable, profitable and delightful to yourselves.

X. It should be an argument of no small weight with you to be sober-minded, that you will hereby PLEASE YOUR BEST FRIENDS; whereas, by the contrary, you will displease, grieve and offend them. Do you ask, who these good, these best friends are? I answer, in the first place,

God, your Father in heaven. He, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, who is "good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works;" He, I say, will unquestionably be pleased by your being truly pious and virtuous—"Ye have received of us," says the apostle, "how ye ought to walk, and to please God." If God invites, if he encourages, if he requires you to believe in, to love him, to walk in his righteous ways, certainly he will be pleased with your doing so; and displeased if you do otherwise. Has he not said, "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early, shall find me?" Is not his holy spirit said to "strive with men," to this end? and to be

"grieved" with those that resist and oppose him?—with them that abuse his goodness and oppose his light and truth; chusing to walk in the paths of darkness and error, vice and misery? What compassion did God of old express towards Ephraim? what pleasure at his repentance, and return to him?—assuming, as it were, all the passion and tenderness of an earthly father. —"I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus—I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord*." Consider also the well-known parable of the prodigal son, as it is commonly called; one principal design of which was, to represent the love and compassion of our heavenly Father

* Jer. ch. xxxi.

ther; and his pleasure in those that return to him. It is said, that when the foolish, unhappy youth was on his return home, but while he was "yet a great way off," "his father saw him, and had compassion," "and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." And presently after, the father is introduced, saying to the elder brother, "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." Thus compassionate is God, to those who err from his truth and ways; and thus pleased when they repent and return. This is also the principal scope of two other parables in the same chapter*: one of which our Lord himself explains and applies in these words:— "Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth;"—and the other of them in words to the same purpose. "Like as a father pitieth his children," says the psalmist, "so the Lord pitieth children; taking them up in his arms, and blessing them." * Luke ch. xv.

them that fear him. And, surely, you have no friend equally good and great as the God and Father of all; none whom you are under such strong obligations to please; none, whom you ought, from a principle of ingenuity and gratitude, to be so cautious of offending.

Another of those good friends, whom you will please by your sobriety, is the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved you so well as to come down from heaven, to live a miserable life on earth, and to die an ignominious, accursed death upon a cross, for your redemption. This you may be positively assured of; for “he gave himself a ransom for ALL;”—“tasted death for EVERY man;” and is the “propitiation for the sins of the WHOLE world.” In the days of his flesh, he shewed the tenderest love and kindness, not only to young men, as is recorded upon several occasions, but even to little children; taking them up in his arms, blessing them; and saying, “Suffer the

“ little children to come unto me, and
 “ forbid them not; for of such is the king-
 “ dom of heaven.” Our compassionate
 Saviour is said to have been grieved for the
 hardness of their hearts, who refused to
 receive his heavenly instructions, counsels
 and warnings, designed for their good.
 And how tenderly did he lament the folly,
 the impenitence, and the approaching de-
 struction of Jerusalem, when he beheld the
 city, and “ wept over it, saying, If thou
 “ hadst known, even thou, at least in
 “ this thy day, the things which belong
 “ unto thy peace! but now they are hid-
 “ den from thine eyes*.” And again:
 “ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest
 “ the prophets, and stonest them which are
 “ sent unto thee, how often would I have
 “ gathered thy children together, even as
 “ an hen gathereth her chickens under her
 “ wings, and ye would not †.” What a
 lively representation is this, of his com-
 passion even for obdurate sinners? The

* Luke xix. 42.

† Matt. xxiii. 37.

Lord Jesus Christ, though set down in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, has the like love, the like pity, the like tenderness for you all in general, now, that he had of old for Jerusalem. His goodness is unchanged; he can still have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; being a merciful, as well as faithful high priest, in things pertaining unto God. And will you displease, will you grieve, will you offend such a Friend, by persevering in sin and folly? — ONE, who has laid you under such immense obligations!

THE HOLY ANGELS, though unseen and unknown by you, are other, and truly excellent friends to you; whom you would highly please and delight, by obeying their Lord and ours; and whom you displease by persevering in your sinful ways. They are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation: and it is particularly declared by our Saviour, that “there is joy in the presence of the angels”

“of God over one sinner that repenteth.” Surely then, you will, on the other hand, give them trouble and sorrow, if sorrow can touch those pure and blessed intelligencies, by resisting and disobeying the truth. And does it become you to grieve these benevolent spirits, who are as it were your appointed guardians; who delight in doing good offices for you, in conformity to their charge; and who would be so rejoiced at your conversion to God?

Other of your friends, some of whom were probably once known to you, though now removed out of your sight, and whom you would please by being sober-minded, are “just men made perfect;” the noble army of martyrs, and the whole church of the first-born, which are written in heaven. Amongst these are all your PIOUS ANCESTORS, who have died in the Lord; and who now live with him, beholding his face in righteousness. Amongst them are also, probably, some of your other near relations, and cotemporaries; those whom you lately

knew and conversed with. All, all these, as well as the "innumerable company of angels," wish to see you truly wise and virtuous; that so, in due time, they may hail you to those blissful regions; and that you may be forever associated with them in one glorious society, "a kingdom that cannot be shaken." Yea, my young brethren, methinks, I hear them now calling to you from the celestial mansions, in the same words which the TWO WITNESSES heard from heaven, when a great voice came to them, saying, "COME UP HITHER *!" — For the bride, the Lamb's wife, [the church triumphant] as well as the Spirit, saith, "COME. And let him that heareth say, COME. And let him that is athirst, COME: And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely †."

Your best friends on earth, as well as in heaven, will be rejoiced to see you wise

* Revel. xi. 12.

† Ch. xxii. 17.

and virtuous; and grieved to see you foolish and profligate. I may here particularly mention your pious and good parents, who have done so much for you, and whose love you cannot doubt. "A wise son," says Solomon, "maketh a glad father; but a foolish son, is the heaviness of his mother." Every virtuous and good parent, can sincerely address his child in the language of the same wise king—"My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine; yea, my reins shall rejoice.—*" All good men had far rather see their children SOBER-MINDED, the friends and followers of Jesus Christ, than beautiful, rich and prosperous in this world. And whom, on earth, should you be so desirous to please and gratify, or so loth to grieve and disquiet, as those to whom, under God, you owe your very being?—those who have brought you up with so much care and tenderness, taking unwearied pains for you; and whose chief

I here then, my beloved young brethren,
are the friends whom you will certainly

• Prov. Ch. xxiii.

Worldly concern is probably, to see you well provided for, virtuous and happy?

But you have many good friends, besides your parents, who would sincerely rejoice to see you truly religious. All your acquaintance in general, that fear God, would be pleased to have proper evidence of your doing the same: and I know of one in particular, that would be so. He shall be nameless: only I may tell you, he is one that, if his own mediocrity of years would allow him to use the paternal stile with reference to you, could, with great sincerity, adopt those words of the apostle John in his third epistle—"I have no greater joy, than to hear that my children walk in the truth."—Let me just add, that he is One who claims some sort of interest in you: as hoping to have you for his joy, glory and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus—

These then, my beloved young brethren, are the friends whom you will certainly

please by being sober-minded, and displease by going on in the paths of folly and vanity, vice and misery. Think, whether they are not such as you ought to be studious of gratifying in every reasonable way; and very loth to disoblige, offend or grieve, by any ungrateful and unreasonable conduct.

XI. Consider, in the next place, who those persons are, whom you will please by a foolish, criminal and profligate behaviour; that so, upon a fair comparison, you may judge whether you ought to gratify the latter, or the former: for you cannot please both; their views, dispositions and interests being directly opposite to each other; just as opposite as light and darkness, Christ and Belial, heaven and hell.

And here a certain ancient, famous PRINCE, who has far more subjects than the greatest earthly Monarch, claims the inglorious precedence. I mean, "the

the Prince of the devils"—“the Prince of
 “the power of the air,” the wicked spirit
 that worketh in all the children of disobe-
 dience. You will, without doubt, highly
 gratify him and his angels, by continuing
 in your sins. He made himself famous of
 old, by stirring up rebellion in heaven;
 and afterwards on earth, by deluding and
 betraying our first parents; by usurping a
 kind of dominion over mankind; by de-
 ceiving almost the whole world for many
 ages; by his enmity and opposition to the
 Son of God, when he came to rescue man-
 kind from his cruel tyranny, and to destroy
 the works of the devil. This wicked One
 has, ever since, excited the children of
 darkness and disobedience to oppose the
 truth, and the kingdom of God on earth;
 endeavouring by all means to deceive, to
 hurt and destroy mankind; in which he
 has succeeded to admiration. “Your ad-
 versary the devil,” says the apostle,
 “goeth about continually as a roaring
 lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

“the” I mean, I suppose, the

Now you cannot in the least doubt, but that you will highly gratify the devil and his angels, by rejecting the truth of God; by denying and blaspheming Jesus Christ; by neglecting the worship of God, despising the ordinances of the gospel, and leading wicked lives. These are the very things which they aim at; which they have all along been, and are still tempting you to do, and I fear as to some, not in vain; the very things in which they place their joy, triumph and glory. Every time you set yourselves to oppose the truth; every time you take God's name in vain; every time you turn your backs with contempt upon Christ's institutions; every time you speak falsely, or do any wicked thing, then it is that you please the devil; and the farther you are from all sobriety of mind, the more dear will you be to him. You cannot more disoblige the apostate spirits, than by a grateful reception of the gospel, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. They have a fixed aversion to all sobriety,

all truth, all godliness, righteousness, humility, charity and temperance. Besides: whenever any person, old or young, repents and returns to God, the devil is enraged at the thoughts of losing a subject; he considers such a One as a rebel and traitor to himself, and is sorely vexed at having the prey which he was on the point of devouring, snatched as it were out of his jaws. These envious and malicious spirits cannot endure that any of the earth-born sons of Adam, should be eternally happy in those glorious mansions, from which themselves were banished for their pride, their sedition, and rebellion against the King of heaven. So that there is not one of the angels of darkness, numerous as they are, but what you will gratify by continuing in sin and folly, and highly displease by being sober-minded.

But what has Satan ever done for you, that you should be desirous or willing to please him? Is he your maker? No. Does he preserve and take care of you? No.

Did he die for you? No; but is angry even to rage, that Another did. Has he laid you under any sort of obligation to please him? No. Has he any encouragement to give you for pleasing him? No. He will afterwards only upbraid and torment you for your folly therein. Did he ever intend you the least good in any one respect? No; nothing but mischief. Will you then gratify your inveterate adversary, "that old serpent called the Devil," and "Satan," or his angels?—especially when you consider that, by doing so, you will displease the God that made and loves you; Jesus Christ who died for you; and grieve the good Spirit of God, as well as those holy angels that "kept their first estate," and are daily employed in offices of kindness for you!

But besides the devil and his angels, you may perhaps, by your sin and folly, please great multitudes of the human race, both old and young, that have lived and died in their sins, and are now in the place of tor-

ment. It seems not improbable, that these miserable souls might chuse to have other persons tread in their steps, and share their fate, instead of being sober, wise and happy. This is the way in which envy and wickedness, disappointment and despair, commonly work; I mean in this world. Though it seems in some measure doubtful, whether you would please even those self-destroyed persons, when we consider our Saviour's parable, commonly called the parable of Dives and Lazarus. According to which, when the rich fool died, and lift up his eyes in hell, he requested that warning might be sent from the invisible world to his brethren on earth, lest they also should come into that place of torment. When I consider this part of the parable, I cannot be confident that you would please those wretched souls in darkness and despair, by following their example, and having your portion with them; though there are some other passages of scripture, which seem to favor this supposition; particularly the following—"Hell from beneath is moved for

“thee, to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth.”—But supposing it were certain that you would gratify all the wicked that are already in the regions of woe, by being vicious and impious; yet there can be no reason why you should be desirous to please them at all; especially at so dear a rate; and when you consider, that you cannot do this without displeasing the “spirits of just men made perfect,” who with well to you, and long for an opportunity to welcome and congratulate your safe arrival at the mansions of joy and glory. But,

Lastly, by continuing in your sins, you will probably please some of the most foolish and abandoned of mankind, both male and female. Such persons as these, may be in some measure kept in countenance, and perhaps other vile gratified, by having you for their companions in folly. Come with us—Cast in thy lot among us—my son. Mat. xiv. 9.

and wickedness. And, on the other hand, should you become virtuous and sober, they might be disgusted thereat; looking upon your reformation and good conduct as a tacit reproach to themselves for their continued profligacy, and depraved manners. But would it be any ways proper for you to please such foolish and wicked persons as these, who do not sincerely wish well to you, whatever they may pretend? Especially, when by that means you will certainly displease and trouble many wise and virtuous people; your parents and others, who are unquestionably your friends. Let me here remind you of a passage in the Proverbs of Solomon, relating to the enticements of evil companions; not merely because it is directly to the point in hand, but because I have not any where else, perhaps, so particularly warned you as to this matter, as would have been proper. "My son," says the wise man, "if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, 'Come with us—Cast in thy lot among us—my son, walk not in the way with

“them; refrain thy foot from their path :
 “for their feet run to evil—and they lay
 “wait for their own blood *.”

Thus you have seen on one hand, whom you will certainly please by being sober-minded; and on the other hand, whom you will, or may possibly gratify by the contrary. By it you will please God, your Maker and compassionate Father; the Lord Jesus Christ, who laid down his life for you; the good spirit of God, which is striving with you; the holy angels, who are daily ministering unto you; the noble army of martyrs, and all the saints in heaven, who long to hail your arrival there; your parents, and many other wise and good men on earth, who sincerely wish well to you. But then, on the other hand, you will not hereby gratify, but displease the god of this world, the devil and his angels, who seek your destruction; and, perhaps, the wicked already in a state of tor-

ment; as well as a few profligate, abandoned rakes of BOTH SEXES, on earth;—some of the most foolish, wicked and infamous of the human race, who may either desire you as their associates in vice and folly, or might consider your repentance and reformation as a tacit reproof of their impiety, impudence, and profligate lives. This, I think, is summing up the present argument fairly and impartially: nor will I call in question the goodness of your understandings so much, my young brethren, as to suppose it possible for you to doubt in any degree, whether it becomes you to gratify the former or the latter. One of them you must needs please, and displease the other: you cannot gratify both. It therefore only remains for you to make your choice!

XII. If you should continue in the practice of vice, folly and wickedness, one PRINCIPAL END of Christ's coming into the world;—of his teaching, life and death, will, as to you, be INTIRELY FRUS-

46 SERMON XLII

TREATED The important end which I
 have here in view, is your recovery to a
 sound mind; your deliverance from your
 natural darkness and depravity, your lusts,
 and sinful practices; by being brought to
 the knowledge, love and practice of true
 virtue, godliness, and all good works.
 That this was a principal end of Christ's
 mediation, is very clearly and forcibly de-
 clared in the same chapter with my text,
 as an argument for sobriety and good
 works. Now For the grace of God that
 bringeth salvation to all men, so it
 might be rendered hath appeared; teach-
 ing us, that, denying ungodliness, and
 worldly lusts, we should live soberly,
 righteously and godly in this present
 world." And again afterwards; "Who
 gave himself for us, that he might re-
 deem us from all iniquity, and purify
 unto himself a peculiar people, zealous
 of good works." Now what do these
 expressions imply, either more or less than
 this, That one great design of Christ's
 mediation, and of the grace of God, ap-

SERMON XIII. 27

pearing in the gospel, was, that we might
 be **SOBER-MINDED** in that comprehensive
 sense, in which these terms were explained
 in some preceding discourses. The whole
 evangelical history, wherein we have an
 account of our Lord's doctrine, example
 and precepts; and all the apostolical writ-
 ings in general, are a clear, incontestible
 proof of the same thing. And does it not
 from hence as plainly appear, that if you
 continue to live unsoberly, unrighteously
 and ungodly in the world, you will there-
 by counteract and defeat one principal end
 of Christ's manifestation in the flesh? Let
 me add, that if this design of his mediation
 is frustrated as to you, it will be in vain
 for you to expect, that the other important
 ends thereof will be answered; such as,
 your being pardoned and justified, and be-
 ing finally happy in the kingdom of hea-
 ven. For without that repentance and
 faith, which are the principle and begin-
 ning, of a sober, righteous and godly life,
 there is no forgiveness of sins, no justifi-
 cation with God, no title to future glory,
 honor and immortality.

If you pay any regard at all to the christian revelation, as I presume you do, you cannot, surely, but be in some measure concerned, that the design of Christ's mediation in general, and particularly this essential and important part thereof, may be answered as to yourselves. One would think, you must be greatly shocked at the thought of its being frustrated by your persevering in the ways of vice and folly; as though the Son and grace of God had never appeared, bringing salvation to all that will thankfully accept of it. What! did the Son of God, the brightness of his glory, and "in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" did the Son of God, I say, give himself for you, that he might redeem you from all iniquity,—from the power, as well as the guilt of sin; and will you, notwithstanding this, live in the practice of sin, of ungodliness and worldly lusts! Hath such grace appeared, and has the Lord from heaven preached and died, that he might purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and

will you still do the works of darkness, the works of the devil, those evil works which God abhorreth ! I am astonished, and even tremble, as you may well do, to think of your thus counteracting the design of the glorious gospel. What the consequence of this will be, will appear more particularly in my next discourse. In the mean time, let me exhort you seriously to consider of the matter ; and to bear in mind those words of the apostle, with which I conclude for the present — “ Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward : how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him ; God also bearing them witness, both with signs

“and wonders, and with divers miracles,
 “and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according
 “to his own will *?”

• Heb. ii. 1-4.

XIV.

CHRISTIAN SOCIETY
 MORE CONSIDERATIONS
 THAT AN HAPPY DEATH, AND ETER-
 NAL LIFE, ARE CONNECTED THERE-
 WITH; BUT DESTITUTE OF IT, MISERY
 AND EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.

S E R M O N XIII

“and wonders, and with divers miracles,
“and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according
“to his own will.”

S E R M O N XIV.

CHRISTIAN SOBRIETY

ENFORCED BY

MORE CONSIDERATIONS,

A S

THAT AN HAPPY DEATH, AND ETER-
NAL LIFE, ARE CONNECTED THERE-
WITH; BUT DESTITUTE OF IT, MISERY
AND EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.

MEMORIAL

OF THE

CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

OF THE

In the four last sermons I exhorted
 you to be sober-minded, by level-
 lations of great, though not all
 equal weight. I shall now, by the will of
 God, proceed in this exhortation, my
 young brethren, by laying before you some
 other motives and arguments, if possible
 more important in their nature than those
 which have been mentioned already. In
 which reason they have been reserved as
 the last. But they are very common argu-
 ments, such as are at least hinted at in al-
 most every chapter of the New Testament
 and touched upon in almost every sermon
 you hear. I am therefore, in the first

S E R M O N XIV.

T I T U S ii. 6.

YOUNG MEN *likewise exhort to be sober-minded.*

I N the four last sermons I exhorted you to be SOBER-MINDED, by several considerations of great, though not all of equal weight. I shall now, by the will of God, proceed in this exhortation, my young brethren, by laying before you some other motives and arguments, if possible, more important in their nature than those which have been mentioned already: for which reason they have been reserved as the last. But they are very common arguments; such as are at least hinted at in almost every chapter of the New Testament, and touched upon in almost every sermon you hear; 'as arguments of so interesting a

nature, and such general use, ought doubtless to be. Their commonness, however, will at least warrant my being shorter upon some of them, than would otherwise be convenient. To proceed then;

XIII. If you are sober-minded in life, you will DIE HAPPILY, in a state of FAVOR WITH GOD. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his;"—was the wish and prayer of that same wicked Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but at a time when he was under the prophetic and divine afflatus, and thereby carried into futurity*. This is probably, in some sort, the desire of all wicked men in general; at least, of all who live under the light of the gospel, whenever they think of death. This they are often obliged to do; and are indeed, many of them, through fear of death, all their lifetime subject to a miserable bondage. How differently soever men

chuse to live; yet all in general would chuse to die alike; to die the death of the righteous;—in peace and favor with the great God, and in hope of his glory.

Now, to be truly wise and virtuous; to live the life of the righteous; or, in other words, “to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God*,” is the sure way to die the death of the righteous. But it is impossible in the nature of the thing, that a wicked, unrighteous man, continuing such, should die thus. Let me briefly guard against two misconstructions of my meaning here. First, it is not hereby intended, that what is called, or truly is, a sober, christian and godly life, is a perfect righteousness, in which to stand unshaken at God’s tribunal, or to meet death with composure, firmness and triumph, independently of the redemption wrought out by Christ, the gracious promises of the

Micah vi. 8.

gospel, or the "righteousness of God by
 "faith." That sobriety of mind and man-
 ners, which is to give you peace and hope
 in death, is a christian sobriety: and this
 supposes repentance of sin, christian faith,
 an humble sense of your own unworthi-
 ness, and a dependence upon the grace of
 God in Christ, for acceptance with him.
 Your hopes both in life and death, are to
 be grounded ultimately upon the free grace
 of God, as revealed in the gospel; and
 upon your own sobriety, in reflecting there-
 on, only indirectly or mediately, considered
 as an evidence of your being in a state of
 favor with God, as the required condition
 of, and a meetness, preparation or quali-
 fication for, future happiness: or, in other
 words, as it is CHARACTERISTICAL of those
 persons, who are entitled to the benefit of
 Christ's redemption. Secondly, it is not
 hereby intended, that none can be saved,
 according to the terms of the gospel, be-
 sides those who have lived for a number of
 years, or some considerable time, in that,

"in the paths of righteousness;" will of

sober, righteous and godly manner, which the gospel requires. Whenever a sinner becomes a true penitent and believer, in the sense of scripture, he is immediately pardoned, justified, and in a state of salvation: whether he lives afterwards to do works meet for repentance, affects not the safety of his state, or the certainty of his salvation; though it may be of importance to him in other respects, particularly as to his peace, comfort and hope in death; or as an evidence of the genuineness of his repentance, faith, and conversion to God.

With these explanations, living a sober and godly life, is on one hand necessary, and on the other hand, lays a solid foundation for peace and hope in death. The consciousness of having lived such a life, will exclude a servile fear of death, and brighten those naturally gloomy moments. Whoever has light in the Lord to say with the psalmist—"The Lord is my Shepherd"—He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me "in the paths of righteousness;" will of

course be enabled to join with him in the words following: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me *." Or if you can say with the holy apostle, when the time of his departure was at hand—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;" you may also triumph with him in the words which immediately follow—"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing †." In a similar manner the same apostle expresses his hope and joy, as reflecting from the witness of a good conscience, in another of his epistles: "But our rejoicing is this," says he, "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with

* Psal. xxiii. † 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

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“fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God,
 “we have had our conversation in the
 “world—” Agreeably hereto, it is laid
 down as a standing, general maxim in scrip-
 ture, that “the righteous hath hope in his
 “death:” a maxim which has been abun-
 dantly verified in all ages of the world,
 ever since death by sin entered into it. And
 the faithful, in every period of the Chris-
 tian church more especially, have been able
 to triumph over death, saying, “O death,
 where is thy sting? O grave, where is
 thy victory? The sting of death is sin,
 and the strength of sin is the law. But
 “thanks be to God, who giveth us the
 “victory, thro’ our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 Now, my young brethren, since you
 must unquestionably die sooner or later,
 would you not chuse to die in such a joy-
 ful, triumphant manner; meeting this last
 enemy, death, with “hopes full of im-
 mortality,” and, though naturally the

“king of terrors,” rather as your friendly deliverer from all pain and sorrow, than with fear and trembling? I know you are desirous of this; you cannot but wish for such an happy and glorious exit, whenever your appointed time shall come. In one word then, be SOBER-MINDED; for this will make both life and death happy to you.

XIV. It will not be unnatural to draw my next argument, from a consideration of “THAT BLESSED, GLORIOUS and ETERNAL LIFE,” which God that cannot lie, hath promised to all them that believe in his Son, and keep his commandments. A principal design of the gospel, is to proclaim and insure to those who practically believe it, a glorious resurrection at our Lord’s second appearing, and eternal happiness in the kingdom of God, as his free gift through Christ. This is the sum of the gospel, expressed in a few words. It is unnecessary to refer to particular passages of scripture, for these gracious promises;

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the New Testament is full of them. If you are persuaded to be sober-minded, this felicity, this unfading crown of glory and joy, will as surely be your portion, as God and his word are true. Your mortal bodies, which are quickly to be sown in weakness, corruption and dishonor, will in due time be raised in power, purity and glory, by the all-quickning voice of the Son of God.

You shall stand at his right hand with great boldness, when he sits upon the throne of his glory, while all the guilty nations are trembling at his left. Then shall your ears be ravished, your souls transported with those gracious and most joyful words, from the mouth of him that died for you, and to whom all judgment and authority are committed—"Come, ye
"blessed of my Father, inherit the king-
"dom prepared for you from the founda-
"tion of the world*." In consequence
of which, you, with all the "righteous,
"shall go away into life eternal†;" and

* Mat. xxv. 24.

† ver. 46.

possess an inheritance incorruptible; unde-
filed, and that fadeth not away. "God and
his servants shall serve him. And they

"Can you think of these things, my
young brethren, without being filled with
an ardent desire to be made partakers of
such an happiness, such glory, honor and
immortality? I am sure you cannot, if you
really give credit to them. What is any
earthly inheritance which you may have in
view, in comparison with that to which the
"heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus
"Christ," are entitled in the heavens?
What are all worldly riches but dross and
vanity, in comparison with the treasure
there laid up for the righteous! How does
all earthly glory sink? how is it eclipsed?
how does it vanish from the sight, when
you look forward to that, which the Lord
of life and glory has promised to them that
love him? Blessed indeed, thrice "blessed
"are they that do his commandments;
"that they may have right to the tree of
"life, and may enter in through the gates

“into the city. And the inhabitants
 “God and of the Lamb shall be in his, and
 “his servants shall serve him. And they
 “shall see his face; and his name shall be
 “in their foreheads. And there shall be
 “no night there, and they need no candle,
 “neither light of the sun: for the Lord
 “God giveth them light, and they shall
 “reign for ever and ever.” Is it not worth
 while to be SOBER-MINDED, virtuous and
 obedient, for such an happiness, such glory
 as this; even though you should make
 yourselves wretched thereby, during this
 transitory life, which is but as a vapor?
 Whereas the truth is, that you must needs
 be miserable even now, unless you are truly
 religious; and that, by making sure of
 eternal life, you will, beyond all compari-
 son, best provide for your temporal honor
 and felicity.

XV. Consider, in the next place, that
 unless you are truly penitent and sober-
 minded, the guilt of all your sins will lie
 upon you, and you will be wretched in

DEATH. There is no forgiveness with God, even through the blood of Jesus Christ, but in the way of unfeigned repentance towards the former, and faith towards the latter. Which repentance and faith are implied in christian sobriety; and are the principle and substance of it, internally considered; as has been observed in the foregoing discourses. It is therefore just as certain, that without sobriety of mind, you will remain under guilt and condemnation, as it is, that repentance and faith are necessary to pardon, according to the tenor of the gospel: than which there is no one thing more clearly asserted in the holy scriptures; though some persons, suppose pardon and justification to be prior to that repentance and faith, by or through which we are said to be pardoned and justified. Preposterous indeed!

But not to digress: if you should continue in the practice of sin and folly, and remain impenitent till death, how dreadful an hour will that be to you! I mean

if you should then have your thoughts and senses about you; and not be snatched out of the world in a moment, without time for reflexion on what is past, or considering what is to come.—What horrors of conscience? what distress and anguish of soul, will probably seize upon you, when you shall come to lie upon a sick bed? When you shall find your flesh and your heart at once failing you; and God, not the strength of your heart, nor likely to be your portion, but your terror, forever! When all your sins are brought to your remembrance; when you reflect how you have abused the goodness and patience of God; how you have despised his grace and mercy; how you have scorned his reproofs and threatnings! When it will no longer be in your power to forget God, nor to think of him, but with fear and amazement, as that almighty, most holy and righteous Being, whom you have offended! When the terrors of the last day shall be present in imagination, and all the pains of hell that can be endured on earth, shall “get

hold upon you? This is the state of wicked men under the gospel, when they come to die; unless they are either self-deluded hypocrites, or quite stupified, having their consciences seared as with an iron. Thus are they driven away in God's anger, while the righteous have hope and joy in their death. They are often to overwhelmed with a sense of their guilt, and have such a sentence of eternal death in themselves,—in their own prophetic consciences, as not to have the least heart or courage even to implore forgiveness; or to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Wretched state indeed; to have such a lively sense of sin, that the need of pardon is felt in the most excruciating manner; and yet to have all conceptions of God's mercy, as it were swallowed up and lost in those of his righteous vengeance! Though by the way, if sinners should implore mercy at such a time, when they are under the actual arrest of divine justice, it is by no means clear either from reason or scripture, that they shall obtain

it. For they may do so, without that genuine repentance and faith, which the gospel makes necessary in order for forgiveness. And there are many passages of scripture, which look quite the other way. I mean, which imply that the wicked may thus sue for mercy, and yet be rejected; particularly a passage in the Proverbs of Solomon, with which I shall close the present argument; and which I exhort you seriously to consider, lest yourselves should one day be sad examples of the unutterable horrors of impenitent, dying sinners—
 "Because I called, and ye refused—ye
 "have set at naught all my counsel, and
 "would none of my reproof; I also will
 "laugh at your calamity; I will mock
 "when your fear cometh; when your fear
 "cometh as desolation, and your destruction
 "cometh as a whirlwind; when distress
 "and anguish cometh upon you. Then
 "shall they call upon me, but I will not
 "answer; they shall seek me early, but
 "they shall not find me."

Prov. ch. i.

There is nothing so near to the actual torments of hell, as the horror and despair of wicked men in the hour of death; whether in respect of time, or of pain and anguish: they are hell already begun in the soul. My last argument shall therefore be drawn

XVI. From a consideration of the FUTURE MISERY and PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED, as foretold and represented in the sacred oracles. You have already seen what the sad consequence of sin and folly will be, both in life and in death. It now remains for you to look beyond life, death and the grave, into the eternal state; and seriously to consider what the consequence thereof is to be in the other world; a state, though invisible, yet not imaginary, but as real as the present.

If the only consequence of dying in your sins, were, to be excluded from the kingdom of heaven; to be banished from the society of just men made perfect, and

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of the innumerable company of holy angels; from the face of him that once died to save you, and from the favorable presence of your Creator, your God, your Father, in whose presence there is fulness of joy: I say, if you were only to be thus excluded from the regions of the blessed, thus turned off and discarded, as unworthy of their fellowship; yet how can you endure the thoughts of this! When God pronounced only the following sentence upon the wicked Cain,—“Now art thou cursed from the earth—when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a FUGITIVE and VAGABOND shalt thou be in the earth;” the guilty wretch was so overwhelmed with the thoughts of his misery and disgrace, that he cried out, “My punishment is greater than I can bear*.”

This, surely, was but a light punishment, in comparison of being exiled, hereafter from the everlasting kingdom of Christ.

* Gen. iv. 11—12.
the society of just men made perfect, and

Can you then, (unless you are more stupified, more hardened and abandoned than that infamous murderer was) think, without the utmost grief and anguish of soul, of being excluded from heaven, and the blessed society thereof?— Especially, from the favor and enjoyment of Him, in whose favor is life, and whose loving-kindness is better than life; and to be fugitives and vagabonds in some unknown part of the world? Is this punishment no greater than you can bear? O dismal exile indeed, though it were but for a few years or days! O insupportable thought! unutterable woe! What! banished from heaven, from the face of your God, your Father, your Saviour; as well as from the fellowship of good men, and holy angels! Think of it but a moment, and make it real to yourselves; and you will find cause for a far more bitter lamentation than that of Cain!—

But perhaps the place, the country, to which the wicked are to be thus banished

and confined, will be an agreeable one, and a delightful region in some yet undiscovered part of the universe, where they may amuse and enjoy themselves in a considerable degree; and be consoled, by the pleasurable situation, in their absence from God, and the company of the blessed in heaven. FAR OTHERWISE! Every place besides heaven, will be an hell, a place of torment, to the wicked. And that, in which impenitent sinners are to have their abode, is particularly represented in scripture, as a place of "outer darkness," and a "lake burning with fire and brimstone," &c. Joyless region indeed!

And who are to be the companions of your exile, if this should be your own fate; as it most certainly will, if you should live and die in your sins? The felicity of creatures that are by nature formed for society, depends very much upon the dispositions and qualities of those, with whom they converse. But do you imagine

that your companions in the realms of darkness, will be such as you will be delighted with?—those, whose society will be a comfort and relief to you in your banishment from heaven, from saints and angels, from Christ and God? such as will cause a degree of light and joy, in those gloomy regions? Vain imagination! Your company will not alleviate, but increase your misery. For what else can be expected from the society of wicked persons like yourselves, in a state of punishment; all, full of envy, rage, despair! Or what else can be expected from the society of those malicious spirits, the devil and his angels, who shall have deluded you to your destruction; and who are perhaps, at this very moment, tempting you to infidelity; and pleasing themselves with the hopes, that they shall succeed in their designs against you! Can you expect to live in peace with, or to have any consolation, any alleviation of your distress in the regions of woe, from such company as this!

If Job, in the day of his calamity, said very justly even to his friends, "Miserable comforters are ye all;" what will you say to such comforters as these?—damned men and devils! Nor will you hereafter have any that are better, if you now reject that divine and blessed Comforter, the Spirit of truth and holiness.

But perhaps you flatter yourselves, that the time of this dreadful exile from God, in such a dismal region, and in company far worse than the most lonely solitude, will be but short: so that it may be borne by the wicked, at least with some patience, from the prospect of a speedy release, with liberty to enter into the mansions of rest and joy. FAR OTHERWISE!

In the language of scripture, "they shall be punished with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." And it is said elsewhere, that "the smoke of the torment ascendeth up for

244 SERMON XIV.

“ever and ever; and they have no rest
“day nor night.”—

Consider then the time, (for know that
the time will come!) when the small and
great, being raised from the dead, shall
stand before God—before the judgment-seat
of Christ, appearing in the majesty and glory
of the FATHER, to receive the things done
in the body. The time when all the wick-
ed, and yourselves amongst them, if you die
impenitent, shall appear, tho’ unwillingly,

* The dismal situation waste and wild:

A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,

As one great furnace flam’d, yet from those
flames

No light; but rather darkness visible,

Serv’d only to discover sights of woe.

Regions of sorrow! doleful shades! where
peace

And rest can never dwell! hope never comes,

That comes to all; but torture without end

Still urges, and a fiery deluge—

Such place eternal justice had prepar’d—

PARAD. LOST, L. I.

reluctant and trembling, before this dreadful tribunal; with a quick and perfect consciousness of all your sins committed in this life; particularly of your having despised the riches of God's goodness, forbearance and long-suffering, and trodden under foot his Son, who once came into the world to save sinners; and whom you shall then behold as your righteous Judge! The time when the "books shall be opened," those faithful records of all your past transgressions in thought, word and deed; (mighty volumes!) to the truth of which in every tittle, your own consciences shall testify as a thousand witnesses; declaring to you, with a decisive voice not to be opposed, your just demerits! The time when, these dismal pages having been read before men and angels, and there being no need of witnesses, that same Jesus who was once crucified without the gates of Jerusalem, and whose grace you scorned, shall arise to pronounce your doom with thunder in his hand, his eyes as a flame of fire, and a tempest in his

face; thousands standing before him, and ten thousand times ten thousand angels who excel in strength, attending to execute his orders: when, having before-passed sentence on the blessed at his right-hand, he shall turn to those on the left, saying with a voice like the sound of many waters, "Depart from me"—! — O amazing, heart-dissolving words! at once too important ever to be forgotten, and yet too dreadful, almost, to be remembered! — "DEPART FROM ME, YE
 "CURSED, INTO EVERLASTING FIRE,
 "PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS
 "ANGELS*." — "The word of God," saith the apostle, "is quick and powerful;
 "and sharper than any two-edged sword,
 "piercing even to the dividing asunder of
 "soul and spirit, and of the joints and
 "marrow, and is a discernor of the
 "thoughts and intents of the heart." You can hardly hear those words of the Lord now uttered, though by a "man that is a

“worm” like yourselves, without trembling as the guilty Fælix did, when the apostle reasoned with him of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come; and though you probably consider this scene as far remote in futurity. How then will your hearts endure, when you shall hear the same awful words in more than thunder, pronounced by HIM, “from whose face the earth and the heavens shall flee away!” At his feet you will doubtless fall as dead; as St. John once did, when, in the visions of God, he saw him in his majesty and glory; when “out of his mouth went a sharp two-edg’d sword, and his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength.” But alas! he will not reanimate and comfort you, as he did the holy apostle on that occasion—“I fell at his feet as dead,” says the apostle; “and he laid his right-hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am

"live for evermore." Not you will be raised up and revived, only as pronounced malefactors, fainting under their pain or terrors, sometimes are, to have the just sentence, the CURSE OF THE LAW punctually executed upon them. It is not cruelty to punish the wicked according to their demerits, when the ends of government require it; as in the present case. Mercy having been before scorned, no weak pity or tenderness will have any place in this day of vengeance. For the Judge himself, who even now standeth at the door, hath said that the wicked thus condemned, "shall go away into everlasting punishment." †

It were most ingenuous in you, doubts, to be led effectually to repentance, by the grace and goodness of God; as I would hope that some of you, at least, will be. But if any of you are too far hardened for this, you perceive that motives of a

Rev. i. 10, 17, 18. † Mat. xxv. 46.

very different kind are not wanting.
 "Knowing therefore the terror of the
 Lord, we exhort, we persuade men."
 If the tender mercies of a father will not,
 at least let the righteous vengeance of a
 God, and the fear of wrath to come, serve
 to reclaim you from the error of your
 ways, that you may at last be found of
 him in peace! If you should not be thus
 found of him, you will doubtless say, It
 had been "good for you, that you had
 "not been born." You have, surely,
 more sense and ingenuity, than to suspect
 I am become your enemy, because I thus
 plainly tell you the truth. It is important,
 it is salutary truth; though perhaps irk-
 some to some of you in the hearing, and
 far from being the most agreeable to my-
 self in the speaking. If you duly receive
 and digest it, and are eventually made
 wise thereby; you will find it just the
 reverse, in one respect, of the written roll
 or book given to the apostle to eat;—
 which was, in his mouth, at first, sweet
 as honey, but in his belly, bitter as gall

and wormwood. This, on the contrary, though bitter and unpalatable at first, like gall, will in the end and digestion, be sweet to you; yea, "sweeter than honey" "and the honey-comb." Let me close the present argument with the words of the wise man, addressed to the young; which words, while they seem to encourage young men to proceed in their foolish, criminal practices, are, in reality, the more solemn warning against it. "Rejoice, O young man in thy youth," says he; "and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth: and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes. But KNOW THOU, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment*."

Thus, my beloved young brethren, I have laid before you those arguments and considerations of various kinds, by which I would, and now do, exhort you to be

* Eccl. xi. 9, 10.

SOBER-MINDED. It was far from being my intention to say all, or even an hundredth part, that might be said with propriety upon this most interesting subject. To allude to the words of the apostle John: if all the reasons for, and motives to sobriety, were to be written down, "I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." For the arguments for sobriety, or true religion, are in a sort infinite, like God the object thereof: There is no end of them to be found; the subject is inexhaustible, to any One that duly enters into the nature, spirit and importance of it. The natural dictates of your own consciences, the holy scriptures, life and death, heaven, earth, and hell, time and eternity; and even the commonest objects and occurrences, teem with arguments in an endless succession, in behalf of true religion; clearly and loudly admonishing you to be wise and sober, if you have but an ear to hear, and an heart to perceive. This, in general, is the sentiment that

Solomon expresses in the rhetorical, and nobly-sublime manner following: "Wisdom crieth WITHOUT; she uttereth her voice in the STREETS: she crieth in the chief place of CONCOURSE; in the opening of the GATES, in the CITY she uttereth her words, saying How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scornors delight in their scornings; and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: Behold I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."

I can neither distrust the validity of those arguments which have been particularly proposed to you, nor the goodness of your understandings, so much as to suppose it necessary to add any others to them, in order to the convincing your judgments what is the right, the wisest, the safest, happiest course for you to pursue. No! I doubt not, but that this point, a very material one, is already gained. Would to God, that all your hearts and wills were

is much in the right as to this matter, as I am persuaded your heads are!—And, methinks, you must have sadly depraved and hardened hearts indeed, if even **THEY** are not in some measure touched by so many arguments, all drawn from the word of God; provided you have so far attended to, as to have a tolerable understanding of them. And having thus far discharged my own duty, by laying your's before you; the event must now be left with yourselves, or rather with Him who hath the hearts of all men in his own hand. Without his blessing, even prophets and apostles may preach in vain; much more, so inconsiderable and unworthy a preacher of the everlasting gospel, as he that is now speaking to you.

But you will say, perhaps, “We are young; and need not be in any haste to be **SOBER-MINDED**. It will answer the end as well a number of years hence, when we have in some measure sated ourselves with the pleasures of sin. How

"many are there about us, who, though
 "much older, are not yet any wiser or so-
 "berer than ourselves? Let them set us an
 "example; it will be sufficient for us to
 "follow our superiors."

Unhappy young men! is the love of
 folly and vice then so deeply rooted in your
 hearts, that you cannot bear the thought
 of parting with them so soon? Do you
 think it hard and grievous to be put upon
 the remembrance of your Creator, your
 Father, even now in the days of your
 youth? If young men need not be sober-
 minded, why did the inspired apostle en-
 join Titus to exhort them to be so? Young
 men, certainly, need not be exhorted to
 any thing, which is not expedient for
 young men to do. So that you must sup-
 pose the apostle was under some mistake
 here, or else allow that yourselves have
 some wrong conceptions, some misappre-
 hensions of the matter, when you think of
 deferring it to a later day. This, I sup-
 pose, is a common, and often fatal error

of the young. They are destroyed, not so much by any fixed, positive resolution, that they never will be virtuous and sober, as by procrastination, or putting off the concerns of religion to a farther, and, as they fondly imagine, more convenient season. I propose therefore, distinctly and clearly, though briefly, in my next discourse, to lay open the absurdity of such a conduct. In the mean time, may God's spirit engage you to lay to heart, the several motives, and arguments, which have been offered, and to act accordingly.

Young men need not be sober-minded, why did the inspired apostle enjoin this to exhort them to be so? Young men, certainly, need not be exhorted to any thing, which is not expedient for young men to do. So that you must suppose the apostle was under some mistake here, or else allow that yourselves have some wrong conceptions, some misapprehensions of the matter, when you think of deserting it to a later day. This, I suppose, is a common, and often fatal error

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of the young. They are beloved and
much by my friends, and have no doubt
that they never will be forgotten.
It is a great pleasure to hear of the

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S E R M O N XV.

ON THE
EXTREME FOLLY AND DANGER
OF
DELAYING
TO BE
SOBER-MINDED,
WITH
SOME IMPORTANT COUNSELS AND
WARNINGS TO YOUNG MEN.

S E R M O N XV.

S E R M O N XV.

Young Men likewise expect to be sober-
minded.

EXTREME FOLLY AND DANGER.

THE first sermon on this subject, was taken up with some introductory observations. In the second, third, fourth and fifth, the nature of christian sobriety was distinctly explained. In the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth, divers follies, excesses, and sins which are repugnant thereto, were particularly pointed out. In the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and the preceding discourse, I exhorted you to be sober-minded, by several considerations, which tho' not all of equal, yet are of great weight. But, knowing delay and procrastination, or putting off the concerns of

S E R M O N XV.

T I T U S ii. 6.

YOUNG MEN *likewise exhort to be sober-minded.*

THE first sermon on this subject, was taken up with some introductory observations. In the second, third, fourth and fifth, the nature of christian sobriety was distinctly explained. In the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth, divers follies, excesses, and sins which are repugnant thereto, were particularly pointed out. In the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and the preceding discourse, I exhorted you to be sober-minded, by several considerations, which tho' not all of equal, yet are of great weight. **BUT**, knowing delay and procrastination, or putting off the concerns of

religion, to a farther, and as they fondly imagine, more convenient season, is a common and fatal error of the young; I propose, as the last branch of my general design;

Fourthly, to shew you the extreme folly and danger of delaying to be sober-minded, till you are farther advanced in years. That this is both foolish and dangerous to the last degree, shall be evinced by a variety of arguments; though I shall not much enlarge upon them.

Now, it should be observed here, that all those arguments in general, which have been produced in favour of religion, are as conclusive with respect to the young, as they are with respect to the old. The force of them does not depend upon the particular age of people, any more than it does upon their particular complexion, stature or occupation in life. If you are but reasonable, moral agents, the posterity of Adam; and amongst those, to redeem and

save whom Christ came into the world; all these arguments stand in full force; whether you are ten, twenty or fifty years old. You might say with as much truth and propriety, that it will be time enough for a slender man to be religious, when he is become corpulent; for a fair One, when he has been burnt a few years under the equator, or for an *Aethiopian*, when he has in part changed his skin; as say, that it will be time enough for you to be sober-minded, when you are more advanced in years.

But to be a little more particular here: if to be truly religious, is in itself a reasonable thing, as has been shewn; then it is so for all men at all times, in every season of life, even from childhood to old age. You do, in effect, yourselves acknowledge religion to be founded in nature and reason, by resolving to practice it hereafter, under the notion of its being right, and your duty to do so. For, if it be not reasonable, why will you practice it at all?

Why do you not rather set up a bold resolution at once, against all virtue and sobriety, and determine in your own minds, that you NEVER will fear, love or serve God? This you dare not, you cannot do; because you know that you ought in all reason to love him, and keep his commandments. So that every day and hour of your continuance in sin, you must be self condemned, as acting a part that is contrary to your own reason. Deny it if you can.

If sobriety, or true religion, be honorable at all, it is so at all times; in youth as well as in age. The world in general, as has been shewn, pays respect to virtue and religion, under the notion of its being in nature fit, proper and reasonable for mankind in common; not under the notion of its being proper only for this or that particular person, or persons, of such or such an age. If you consult your reputation therefore, you must resolve to forsake your vices without delay, and to be

sober-minded from this very day: for all the time of your delay, you will justly lie under the imputation of folly and wickedness. And how great a reproach is that?

If there is any difference, religion is, of the two, more amiable and honorable in the young than in the old. For it is an indication of a MATURE JUDGMENT in that season of life, which is so commonly devoted to levity and folly, to vanity and vice. It seems less praise-worthy in an old man to be wise and sober, than for a young one: though, on the other hand, vice and folly may seem rather more inexcusable and shameful in the aged, than they are in the young.

If a virtuous and religious life is, beyond all comparison, the most contented and happy one; then the earlier you enter upon such a life, the better it will be for you; the more peace and comfort, the more real satisfaction and pleasure you will enjoy in life. All the time that you continue stran-

gers to wisdom and virtue, whether longer or shorter, you are putting a cheat upon, and defrauding yourselves: you deprive yourselves of that superior and substantial happiness, which flows from true religion; and subject yourselves to the many vexations, mischiefs, and uneasy apprehensions, which naturally attend folly and vice.

The sooner you become wise and virtuous, the more serviceable you will be to the world: the better you will fill up your stations in life; the better you will answer the end of your creation, by doing good to your fellow-mortals. Society will be much more indebted and obliged to you, if you conduct yourselves properly from your youth up, than if you begin to do so, only as a kind of CEREMONY at parting, and taking a final leave of it.

All the time you continue in the practice of sin, you are acting a most ungrateful and disingenuous part towards God, your Father in heaven, and Jesus Christ

who died for you. You are all this time abusing the divine goodness and patience; and grieving the holy spirit; good angels above, and good men below: and also gratifying your worst, your most implacable enemies, the devil and his angels.

You are all this time also, acting a most presumptuous and audacious, as well as ungrateful part, towards your rightful Sovereign, the mighty God, the great and only Potentate. For you are all this while in a state of rebellion against Him, before whose throne the holy angels veil their faces, and prostrate themselves with the profoundest reverence; and at the very thought of whom, those apostate spirits who are in exile from heaven, tremble, and are horribly afraid.—So that in short, it seems you have neither the filial love and reverence of the great God, which good angels have; nor so much awe and dread of his displeasure, as the angels of darkness. How astonishing then, is your ingratitude on one hand, and your audacity on the other;

while you continue resolved and fearless in the violation of God's commandments!

Repentance and reformation will, in all probability, be attended with more pain, anxiety and difficulty hereafter, than they would be at present; however you may flatter yourselves to the contrary. Sin gains strength by habit and custom; the longer it is continued in, the more is the soul depraved, corrupted and enslaved thereby. The habits of sin are not so easily broken off, when they are old and inveterate, as when but newly contracted; as a confirmed tyranny in any nation, is harder to be broken than a novel and recent one. Agreeably whereto it is said in scripture, Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also that are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well. Which words, though they are not designed to assert the absolute impossibility of breaking off inveterate evil habits, do yet very strongly express the great and peculiar difficulty of it.

The earlier you begin to be wise and virtuous, the more honor will, by your means, redound to God and religion. God is glorified by them that love and obey him, and order their conversation aright. The sooner therefore any begin to do so, the more they will glorify him. And ought you not, in all reason, as far as possible to honor the great and good God, your heavenly father, who daily loadeth you with his benefits?

The sooner you begin to be sober-minded, the greater progress you will make in true wisdom, virtue and holiness; and the greater moral perfection you will have attained to, when your lives shall come to a period. For true religion is in its nature progressive: it is like the light of the rising sun; which at first only glimmers faintly in the east; then overspreads the horizon, and "shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

The sooner you begin to serve God, and your generation according to his will; and the more perfect you are when you come to die in a good old age, the greater will be your reward and honor in the world to come. When all the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father; you will appear with distinguished lustre and glory, proportionably to the degree in which you excelled others on earth, honored God more, and did more good in the world.

You will observe, my young brethren, that all the arguments here touched upon, are grounded upon the supposition, not only that you may probably, but certainly will be SOBER-MINDED hereafter, some time or other, though you should persevere a number of years longer in the practice of sin and folly. They are all strictly conclusive, even upon this supposition.

But I must now remind you, that this supposition is at best a very precarious one. You may have no more disposition, no more inclination to, no more taste for wisdom and virtue in old age, than you have in your youth. Or rather, your aversion thereto may probably be increased instead of lessened; though you seem to take it for granted, that wisdom and sobriety will come of course with years and age. This is one of the many devices of Satan, of which you ought not to be ignorant. You will naturally grow more hardened by continuing in sin, as was intimated before. God may withdraw those restraints, and kind influences of his Spirit, which you now in some measure enjoy; and give you up entirely to your own heart's lust. How many persons are there who, though they had many checks of conscience in youth, and a tenderness of heart in some degree; yet, when they come to middle or old age, appear to be quite hardened and stupified; to have lost almost all sense of moral good and evil, and are become pro-

same scuffers at religion? There are not a few examples of this sort in the world. You see then, that men do not always grow wiser and better, but often wax worse and worse, with years. And what evidence? what rational grounds have you to conclude, that this will not be your own case, should you now in youth stifle the convictions of your own minds; and resist and quench the good Spirit of God, which is striving with you? You have no sort of evidence, however confident you may be, that you shall not be thus left of God; as many others APPARENTLY are.

Consider, in the next place, that while you delay to fear and serve God, you are continually adding to the number of your sins, much too great already! and increasing your guilt every day you live. For there is no medium betwixt doing right and wrong; betwixt serving God, and serving the devil and your lusts. If you do not the former, you will do the latter. And besides; your sins will not only be-

come more numerous, but more aggravated, with your years; being committed against more light and knowledge, than those of your childhood were.

Again: Consider, that if you should die at last in your sins, in a wicked old age, as is not improbable, if you should live to be old, your future condemnation will be so much the more aggravated; and your punishment in the other world proportionably the greater. You are treasuring up wrath to yourselves, against the day of wrath. And the longer you live, if you should at last perish in your sins, the worse it will be for you. It is said, not without a particular emphasis, that "the sinner of an hundred years old, shall be accursed." In which respect, there have doubtless been many persons who, instead of having eventually any cause for rejoicing that they lived so long, have rather had cause to wish that they had been "as an hidden untimely birth; as infants which never saw the light!"

You will take notice, my young brethren, that every one of the foregoing arguments proceeds upon the supposition, that you will actually live to be old men ! Even taking that for granted, there is not one of them but what is absolutely conclusive in favour of being sober-minded in youth. How strong then, is the practical conclusion which results from them all in conjunction !

But I must now remind you, in the last place, that the forementioned supposition of your living till you are old, is much too favorable for you : it is a precarious, unsupported hypothesis ; such an one as no person of the least prudence or discretion would build upon, especially when there is such an interest at stake. Will you boast yourselves of many years to come, or even of to-morrow, when you “ know not “ what a day may bring forth ? ” What a strange infatuation is this, however common ! How many millions of millions of persons younger than you, are already

numbered with the dead in the dust of the earth, not to arise again till those heavens are no more ! How many of the companions of your childhood, of your friends, relations, and perhaps brethren and sisters, tho' born after, are gone before you ? (For in this sense, as well as in divers others, "the first are often last, and the last first.") Some of whom were perhaps taken away by a sudden violent stroke, without previous warning ; and whose lives having been among the unclean, it were needless to say, that their death was not with the pure and holy, nor their portion with the blessed. Now, have you any assurance that you shall not yourselves be thus suddenly snatched out of the world, while you are dreaming about being sober-minded twenty or thirty, forty or fifty years hence ; when you have sufficiently fatigued yourselves in the service of Satan and your lusts ! Has the God of your lives ?—has He in whose hand your breath is, and whose are all your ways, ever told you, that dust and worms shall not cover you before grey hairs appear upon

you? You may be in the place of torment many years before the time comes, which you allot for reformation!

Not one of you, however healthy, strong and flourishing, though like a green bay-tree in its prime, has any security that he shall not be suddenly cut down. For behold, even “now the axe is laid to the root of the trees;” and it cannot be long before “every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, will be hewn down, and cast into the fire.” Young and tender SAPPLINGS fall more easily than trees come to maturity, and to a proper consistence of parts: a small stroke may lay them level with the earth. Yea, they may be mown down as the grass, and the flower of the field, “which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven:” nor are they so green, or full of sap, but that a fire may be found fierce enough to burn them.—In the language of the book of Job, “Man that is born of a woman, is of few days—He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut

“down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.” In the language of Moses, we are “like grafs which groweth up. In the morning it flourishes, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth.—We spend our years as a tale that is told.” In the language of David, “every man at his best estate, is altogether vanity.” In the language of Solomon, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work—in the grave whither thou goest—For man also knoweth not his time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net,” &c. And again, “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not.”—In the language of St. Peter, “All flesh is as grafs, and all the glory of man, as the flower of grafs: the grafs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth forever.” And in the words of St. James, well worthy the attention of all, and particularly of those of you, who are warmly engaged in worldly business, traffic and merchandize;

“ Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-
 “ morrow, we will go into such a city,
 “ and continue there a year, and buy and
 “ sell, and get gain : whereas ye know not
 “ what shall be on the morrow. For what
 “ is your life ? It is even a vapour that ap-
 “ peareth for a little time, and then va-
 “ nisheth away.”

You see then, my young brethren, the
 infinite importance, not only in general of
 being sober-minded, but of being so imme-
 diately, without any delay ; as for many
 other reasons that have been mentioned, so
 particularly for this, that you have no se-
 curity for another day, hour or moment.
 This being the case, how extremely foolish
 and dangerous is it to depend upon living
 many years ! To-day then, as the Holy
 Ghost saith, even while it is called to-day,
 harden not your hearts ; lest to-morrow
 should not be a day of salvation, but of
 perdition to you ! O that you were all
 wise ; that you understood this, and duly
 considered your latter end ! If you knew

how frail you are, and numbered your days aright, it would be morally impossible for you, not to apply your hearts to that salutary wisdom and sobriety, to which you are exhorted.

It may be useful to you, my young brethren, if I here subjoin some short counsels and cautions of a mixed nature; though divers of them may perhaps be near akin to some that are contained in the foregoing discourses; and others only prudential. And,

I. Beware of irreligious, deistical books and men; lest you should be deluded by them to your ruin. Some there are in all ages, who, like the old serpent, though far less subtle, "lye in wait to deceive." There are many, who being either men of grossly depraved and profligate morals, cannot endure the restraints of religion; or else men of uncommon pride, affectation and vanity, set themselves up as champions for infidelity. These latter, not knowing

how to distinguish themselves as their ambition prompts them, by fair and laudable means, engage warmly in this black cause of impiety ; assuming to themselves the airs and importance of men of uncommon penetration and sagacity, merely on the credit of AFFECTING to know more than others, and of contradicting what all the wisest and best men in the world have believed. And how very knowing and learned must these gentlemen be, who have clearly discovered the errors and delusions at least, perhaps the knavery, of those persons, who have been in all ages the most celebrated for wisdom, virtue and piety ! What profound geniuses ? what enlightened, clarified and sublime souls must these sages have, who have so clearly detected the imposture, or the folly and gross ignorance of Moses, Solomon and the prophets ; of JESUS CHRIST and the apostles ; of all our Boyles, Lockes, Clarkes, Newtons, Butlers, Hoadleys, Chandlers, Sherlocks, &c. &c. ? These must be very sagacious gentlemen indeed ! And how benevolent, mag-

unanimous and glorious their attempts to undeceive mankind, and to deliver the world from the errors, the superstitions, and monstrous notions about religion, taught by such persons!—What an ample field was here for the heroic exploits, and imaginary triumphs of vanity in a Collins, a Woolston and a Tindal; in a Shaftsbury and a Morgan, a Chubb and a Bolingbroke?—But it is, in effect, of such men as these, of their sophistical writings, declamations and documents, that Solomon counsels you to beware, saying, “Cease, my Son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.”

2. Give your minds and attention chiefly to plain things in religion; to the obvious doctrines and duties of it; such as are indisputable, and such as all christians are, and ever were agreed in. For these are, without doubt, of the greatest importance; and on the belief and practice of them, more especially, does your present and fu-

ture happiness depend. It cannot be supposed, that the allwise, good and merciful God, has made the eternal salvation of men depend upon abstruse speculations, or things difficult to be understood. History informs us that CALIGULA, one of the most cruel and infamous of the Roman Emperors, commanded his edicts, laws and orders to be written in such small, obscure characters, and then fixed up so high, that it was next to impossible for people in general to read and understand them, that they might know his Majesty's pleasure. This he is said to have done, on purpose to ensnare his subjects; that he might have an opportunity to imbrue his hands in their blood as malefactors, under colour of law and justice. It is said of BASILIDES, another infamous tyrant, that he would often impose the most unreasonable and impracticable commands on his subjects; for example, that he would require One to bring him a pint, or large quantity of his sweat in a vessel, on a cold frosty morning; and another, to bring him a great number of

fleas chained together in a particular manner, at a season, or in a country, wherein no fleas were to be found; and the like; and then put them to death for disobedience. It is said of PROCRUSTES, an infamous robber and petty tyrant, that he would, with great apparent kindness, condescension and humanity, invite people to lodge at his palace or castle; and then cut off the feet and legs of some who were too tall, and stretch and torture others who were too short, to make them just as long as the bed prepared for them. Now, the representations often given us of God's dealings with men, suppose him to be really no better than an ALMIGHTY Caligula, Basilides or Procrustes; or rather, to have all their particular bad qualities, and peculiar caprices united in himself. Thus do some, though I hope ignorantly, blaspheme the all-wise, good and merciful God! Be all such impious conceptions of him far from you, as it is from the Almighty that he should do wickedly, or pervert justice or judgment! You may be assured that all of

you, who sincerely desire to know and to do his will, in order to your eternal happiness, may both know and do it, as far as is necessary to that end, by means of the light, help and grace which he affords to them that seek him. The truth and will of God, as far as your salvation is concerned in knowing it, is not obscurely or darkly, but clearly revealed ; so that “ he that runs may read :” and the path of life, to an honest mind, is so plain, that “ the way-faring men, though fools, can hardly err therein.” There are however, doubtless, some things in the word of God, “ hard to be understood.” Neither, when I advise you to attend chiefly to those that are plain and easy, do I mean that you should not, as far as may be, acquaint yourselves with the whole truth revealed ; “ that ye may stand perfect, and complete in the will of God.”

3. You should always interpret the more obscure and difficult parts of scripture, in consistence with those that are

plain. You should rather forever confess your ignorance of the former, than understand them in a sense repugnant to the latter; and then torture these plain ones, to make them agree with obscure ones MISUNDERSTOOD. This has been a very common practice; particularly in some famous theological controversies that might be mentioned: in which some zealous champions for unscriptural mysteries, have indeed shewn a wonderful dexterity at “darkening counsel by words without knowledge.”

4. If any of you should have leisure and inclination to acquaint yourselves with the state of those controversies, which now subsist in the christian world; whether concerning doctrines, modes of worship, or ecclesiastic order and polity; you should do it rather with a view to your private information and satisfaction, and for the regulation of your own conduct, than that you may be qualified for holding a disputation upon these subjects. At least, if you should

acquire any skill or ability in controversy, which is a kind of FENCING, and sometimes even among the zealous fathers of the church, ended in murderous thrusts and blood: I say, if you should acquire any skill in this art, you should rather use it only upon occasion, in your own necessary defence when attacked, (as honest and peaceable men sometimes do swords) than carry it about with you to assail, or terrify others. It is seldom that any good, and often that much mischief, comes of this kind of controversy; whether you call it playing, fencing or fighting: and, to “shew
 “out of a good conversation your works
 “with meekness of wisdom,” will be much more to your honor and advantage, than the greatest reputation you can possibly obtain in this way.

5. If you should happen to differ in opinion in some respects, from most of those among whom you live; a degree of caution and reserve may be prudent, expedient, and not inconsistent with christian simpli-

eity, or godly sincerity : especially if the difference is not very important in its nature. Men in a private station, and particularly young men, have no call to tell the whole world their particular opinions; and much less, to make it a business to dispute about them. By doing so, some have hurt their own interest very essentially, without doing the least good to others : especially in times and places, wherein bigotry, a party-spirit, enthusiasm and censoriousness have prevailed. You will find this very salutary counsel, if it should HEREAFTER be your lot to live in any country, where such an abominable, antichristian spirit in the common people, is rather encouraged than discountenanced by many persons in authority, and by numbers of the leading clergy ; —by some, through ignorance, and a zeal not according to knowledge ; and by others, from political, avaritious, and worldly motives : neither of which is an uncommon case in this evil world. —But it is not the intent of any thing which I have said, to advise you against ever entering into con-

versation upon disputed points. Occasionally to open your minds freely, and to discourse upon them with people of candor and moderation, whom you know ; not in the controversial way, for vanity or victory, but merely for the sake of receiving or giving information : this, I say, may be at once very agreeable and edifying to you. But remember, there are comparatively but few persons, to whom your minds can be thus laid open, with prudence and safety. And therefore,

6. At all times avoid, as far as possible, entering into any kind of religious dispute with a hot enthusiast, or with any of those persons, whose brains are half-turned with systematical divinity ; and whose ANGRY PASSIONS are apparently engaged in defending the jargon, either of ancient symbols, or of more modern confessions of faith ; all, of human invention, and some of them antisciptural. Would you think either to convince such men, “ foaming out their own shame,” or even to allay

their intemperate heat, clamor and railing, by reasoning with them ;—by sober argument !—At least, first try your talent at reasoning some other way. For example ; try it first on a whirlwind ; then on the cataracts of Niagara, and next on the fiery eruptions of Vesuvius, Stromboli and Ætna. If the experiment succeeds ; if you can suspend the fury and rage of all these, by the force of your reasoning ; you will then have some encouragement to make trial of it upon such men as the foaming enthusiast, and the flaming bigot ; otherwise it is best for you to leave them to God, and endeavour to be, and keep sober yourselves.

7. Avoid all ostentation in religion. Do nothing from a spirit of vain-glory ; especially nothing that has any relation to religion ; but every thing, in lowliness of mind. Neither affect to appear righteous unto men ; but endeavour to do your duty in all respects, as in the sight of God who trieth your hearts. “ Be not righteous

“ over-much ; neither make yourselves
 “ over-wise : why should you destroy your-
 “ selves * ? ” Every thing that is shewy,
 affected and ostentatious in religion ; or
 done with an apparent design to make
 people think the doer very scrupulous, con-
 scientious, and eminently pious, is highly
 disgustful to persons of true wisdom and pe-
 netration ; and, which is far more, highly
 offensive to God, who dwelleth with, and
 delighteth in, them that are of a lowly,
 humble and contrite spirit.

8. On the other hand, beware of false
 shame and modesty ; a common vice, and
 none of the least. People are often ashamed
 of their duty ; sometimes, only lest fools
 should laugh at and deride them for doing
 it ; and sometimes, perhaps, lest others
 should think they have not shame and mo-
 desty enough. To be ashamed, in any
 case, of what is right, and fit to be done,
 and from that principle to omit it, is real

* Eccl. vii. 17.

impudence, and of the worst kind ; because it is offending God, through bashfulness with regard to man. To be sure, never be ashamed of your Saviour, “ or of his “ words ;” but confess both before men on all proper occasions ; lest he should also be ashamed of you, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

9. Rest not satisfied with any profession of religion, or in any superficial reformation of manners : rest in nothing short of Jesus Christ, through faith that worketh by love, and which includes that new birth, and new creature, spoken of in scripture. Every thing short of this, will leave you destitute of christian sobriety ; and therefore, in a state of sin, guilt and death. Besides, unfeigned faith in Christ as the redeemer of sinners, purity of heart, and a supreme love to God, are necessary in order to your having any true delight in his service, and enjoying the comforts of religion, or of the Holy Ghost, in this world. Religion will be rather a burthen, an uneasy restraint to

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you, than your happiness and delight, if you have no more of it than the form. She bestows not her comforts, her divine joys, but on them that sincerely love her, embrace her with their whole heart, and yield themselves up unreservedly to her heavenly influence and power. So long as your hearts are divided betwixt God and the world, they will be miserably torn, and tortured; you will be in doubts, in fears and darkness. But once give up all; renounce every thing that stands in competition with God, and resolve to follow the Lamb "whithersoever he goeth;" then will you indeed find rest unto your souls. Your eye being thus single, your whole body shall be full of light; your souls, of heavenly peace, hope, and comfort.

10. Keep a particular watch and guard upon your own iniquity; upon the sin that most easily besets you, upon your constitutional, and most beloved lust. All people in general have, either originally from nature, or from the circumstances of their

education, employment, or station in life, some such favorite lust or passion; which is to them as a right hand, or a right eye: they know not how to part with it, till they are born of the Spirit; so dear is it to them. And even then, it is not always so far conquered, as to be upon the same level with other vices. The dethroned tyrant, that once reigned without controul, loses not all his power at once; but often struggles to regain his former empire in the heart. In some persons this tyrant is anger, in others envy, in others avarice, in others vanity or pride, in others uncleanness, in others intemperance in meat and drink; and so on. And whatever your own predominant passion is, you are respectively to keep a particular eye upon it. Till you have in some measure got the mastery of it, you are not to imagine yourselves **CHRISTIANS**: this is your particular trial, and a touch-stone of your sincerity towards God.

But to draw near to the conclusion of this discourse and subject together: I have,

in the simplicity of my heart, been taking considerable pains to give you such instructions, counsels and warnings ; and to lay before you such motives to sobriety, as are agreeable to the word of God ; all, with a sincere view to your temporal and eternal good. I have borne it upon my own mind all along, that I am accountable to God for whatever I deliver to you as his word and will, and your duty to believe and practise : and that, if I wilfully or knowingly deliver to you any thing contrary thereto, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men ; I do it at the utmost peril of my own perdition. Let me remind you, on the other hand, my young brethren, that you are also accountable to God, our common sovereign, for the reception which you give to his word and commandments, made known to you ; and, that if you wilfully disregard or neglect them, your peril will be equally great. I therefore beseech, as well as exhort you, to be sober-minded. You will, probably, be either the better or the worse in the end,

for my discourses to you upon this subject : which of them it shall be, depends, under God, upon yourselves ; upon your remembering and observing, or forgetting and neglecting, what has been said to you agreeably to the holy scriptures. God grant, that the event may confirm, and eternally justify my hopes ; that this my labour of love will not be in vain to you !

Before him, the great, the all-knowing, impartial and almighty Judge of all, both you, and I, must ere long appear, to give an account of ourselves respectively. We shall all, at the appointed time, appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ : for God hath “ appointed a day, wherein he will “ judge the world in righteousness, by that “ man whom he hath ordained ; whereof “ he hath given assurance unto all men, in “ that he hath raised him from the dead.” I am certain, that in that great day, I shall not be condemned by him for any wilful perversion of his gospel, either in my discourses on this, or on any other subject ;

my own conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that in this respect at least I am innocent; clear from the blood of you and all men, whether old or young. See, my beloved brethren, See that you give such a reception to the real, the undoubted doctrines and precepts of the gospel, that you may, in respect of your own PRACTICE, have the like comfortable witness of your conscience, and boldness in the day of judgment; lest, otherwise, you should be condemned with the world. Great will be your guilt, heavy your condemnation, inexpressible your misery, if you should persevere in sinning against light, conviction of the truth, and the dictates of your own consciences! Glorious will be your recompence of reward at last, if you believe the word of God, and keep it.

Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Methinks, I already see the heavens which have received him, opening, and the Son

of man descending in great power and glory ! the judgment set ! the books opened ! the dead raised ! the righteous appearing with ineffable joy and triumph ; the wicked with unutterable woe and anguish ! both presaging, beyond the possibility of a doubt, what their sentence will respectively be !—O, my young brethren, where will you ?—where shall I be found, when this great day of the Lord arrives ?—a day so glorious to them that love his appearing ; so dreadful to them that hate him and disobey his commandments !

Let me conclude with expressing the sentiments and desires of my heart, respecting both you and myself, in a short prayer to Him that heareth prayer ;

O THOU, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things ; the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named ! O, graciously behold

the young men in all the habitable parts of the earth, from the womb ignorant of, and therefore estranged from thee : but yet thy offspring ; formed by thy hand, animated by thy breath, and enlightened with a ray from the fountain of light in thee ; born under the common law of mortality, through the offence of One, and naturally subject to the bondage of corruption ; born to die in a few days, and yet to live forever ; encompassed always with thy presence, upheld by thy power, and living only in and by thee.

Great Creator and Father of all ! who despisest not the work of thine own hands ; Thou who didst fashion them so wonderfully in the womb, and take them from it to behold the light ! even thou hast also nourished them and brought them up as children, since they first hung upon their mothers breasts. Thou hast delivered them from many evils, and shielded them from unnumbered dangers, through the feeble states of infancy and childhood. Thou,

on whom all eyes wait, who hearest the young ravens when they cry, and before whom not a sparrow is forgotten : thou hast supplied their natural wants from thy stores and treasures, with a bountiful, a paternal hand ; and madeſt provision for their deliverance from ſin and death, and for their eternal happineſs, even before thou gaveſt them their being. In the fulneſs of time, according to thy gracious promiſe of old, thou didſt ſend forth thy Son, made and born of a woman ; who, by thy grace, hath taſted death for every man, to redeem them that were under the law ; and that we ſinners of the gentiles might alſo receive the adoption of ſons. From children many have had an opportunity to know the holy ſcriptures, which teſtify of thy Son, and which are able to make them wiſe unto ſalvation, through faith which is in him.

O righteous Father ! they have indeed erred from thy ways ; they have ſinned, they have rebelled againſt thee. O give them now repentance, to the acknowledg-

ing of the truth which is after godliness. May they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, to the obtaining life eternal. Wherein they have erred from thy righteous paths, forgive, O most merciful Father ! forgive them, through the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Remember not against them the sins of their youth ; for childhood and youth are vanity. Father forgive them ; for they knew not what they did ! Thou considerest their frame, thou rememberest that they are dust ; and art not strict to mark iniquity. Thou hast said by the mouth of thine holy apostles, that thou wilt have all men to be saved ; and art not willing that any should perish, but that all should come unto repentance ; that they may receive the remission of sins, through Him that died for all, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God ; and who is able to save them unto the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

O holy Father! may the youth be sanctified through thy truth; thy word is truth. Cleanse them thoroughly from their sins, from all unrighteousness, from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, in the pure, the hallowed fountain which thou hast opened. May they be holy, and without blame before thee in love, being followers of thee as dear children the remainder of their days on earth; that they may be heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, whom thou hast appointed heir of all things.

O Thou who wast, and art, and art to come; the same from everlasting to everlasting! behold, thou hast made their days as an handbreadth, and their age is as nothing before thee. Cause them therefore, whose life is as a vapour, as a flower, as a post that passeth by; O cause them to know their end, and the measure of their days what it is; that, considering how frail they are, they may remember thee in the days of their youth; that they may even now apply their hearts unto wisdom,

and for the time to come, be sober-minded according to thy word.

Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning ; Eternal Source of truth and love ! thy unworthy servant hath declared thy love and thy truth unto them, that they might both know and love thee. He hath sown, not perishing or corruptible, but the incorruptible seed ; even thy word, O Lord, which liveth and abideth forever. Though sown in weakness, may it be raised in power ! Thou alone givest the increase, whosoever soweth, or planteth, or watereth. O cause this good seed, though unskilfully sown, to take deep and effectual root in all their hearts, however hard any of them may be, through the deceitfulness of sin ; that it may spring up speedily, and grow, first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear, a goodly and plenteous harvest of the fruit of righteousness, to the glory of thy great name by Jesus Christ ; to their own peace, honor and happiness

here, and to their eternal felicity in thy kingdom which is above.

Perfect the good work already begun in any of them, unto the day of Christ: keep them from falling, that they may in due time appear in thy glorious presence with exceeding joy. And grant, O heavenly, most holy and most gracious Father! grant that thy unworthy servant, having preached to others, may not himself be a cast-away! May he with them, though so unworthy of thy favorable regards, yet through thy unutterable love and grace in Jesus Christ, be found at last at his right hand, whom thou hast made the Lord and Judge of all. With them, and with thy unworthy, though not wholly unfaithful servant, it is a very small thing that they should be judged of man's judgment, or have their names cast out as evil: he that judgeth them, and all, whose judgment is at once true, impartial, and decisive, is the Lord.

In that great day, therefore, O my God ! when the stars of heaven shall fall to the earth, even as a fig-tree shaketh her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind ; when the heavens shall depart as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island shall be moved out of their places ; when the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man ; when all who have killed, persecuted, or maliciously condemned the just ; when all who have rejected and disobeyed thy sacred word, or knowingly perverted it, through the love or fear of this present world, shall hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains ; and shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb : in that great day, O my God ! may thy most unworthy servant, may the young men, to whom I have

declared thy word, may all, of whatever age, sex or degree, having believed and obeyed thy truth, the truth as it is in Jesus, have great peace and boldness ! May even the least of them have then no occasion to “ hide themselves in the dens and
“ in the rocks of the mountains ; or to say
“ to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us,
“ and hide us from the face of him that
“ sitteth upon the throne, and from the
“ wrath of the Lamb !” O grant that, in that day, the least as well as greatest of us may lift up our heads with joy ; knowing that HE who loved us, and whom not having before seen we loved, together with our complete redemption, is come : and may, with the general assembly, the church of the first-born, and the innumerable company of angels, with loud, joyful and triumphant voices, ascribe blessing, and honor, and glory, and power unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. For worthy, O GREATEST and BEST of Beings ! Worthy

is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us unto God by his blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. AMEN!

F I N I S .



